

Russia criticises Israel

MOSCOW (R) — Russia criticised Israel Friday for its decision to expel 12 Palestinians, saying this brought a spirit of confrontation to the Middle East peace process. A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said reducing tensions in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip was the best way to establish a successful dialogue between Israelis and Arabs. The spokesman made clear Russia was taking over the role of the now-defunct Soviet Union as co-sponsor with the United States of the peace process. Preparations were going ahead for a multilateral Middle East conference scheduled for Jan. 28 and 29 in Moscow. "The Russian Federation intends to continue its active efforts for moving forward the peace talks between Arab countries and Israel," spokesman Vitaly Churkin said. "We mean to remain in close contact with the United States and other governments involved in the conflict." The Russian spokesman said the first round of bilateral peace talks, in Washington last month, had constituted a step towards peace. But he regretted Israel's decision to resume the internationally-condemned practice of expelling Palestinians from the territory it occupies.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية والراي

O'Connor meets Lebanese spiritual leaders

BEIRUT (AP) — Cardinal John O'Connor of New York met Friday with Lebanon's Christian and Muslim spiritual leaders and said he hoped he could help this economy-battered nation "a little." Cardinal O'Connor held separate talks with Elias Audeh, Greek Orthodox bishop of Beirut, and with the nation's Sunni and Shiite Muslim spiritual leaders. "I hope I would be able to help a little in any way possible, not only in schools, hospitals, orphanages or churches," Cardinal O'Connor said at the end of his talks. He said he would ask Lebanese emigrants living in the United States to "see what they can possibly do to help Lebanon." Lebanon is seeking foreign aid to rebuild its economy, shattered by civil war between 1975 and 1990. Cardinal O'Connor has visited Lebanon in recent years seeking the release of Western captives held by extremists. All hostages except two Germans have been freed. U.N. envoy Giandomenico Picco is seeking to negotiate their release. The cardinal, who came to Lebanon at the invitation of Maronite Catholic Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Butros Steir, said he would try to "make all Americans visit Lebanon to find the truth about Lebanon."

Volume 17 Number 4896

AMMAN SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1992, JUMADEH AL AKHERA 29, 1412

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Fadiallah blames U.S. for car bombing

BEIRUT (AP) — A Shiite Muslim cleric Friday blamed the United States and Israel for the year-end car bombing that killed 30 people in a crowded Beirut district. Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah labelled the bombing a "barbaric massacre," and said: "The prime accusation is forwarded to Israel, that is to America because Israel cannot do anything without America's approval for there is a strategic alliance between the two." A Mercedes rigged with 100 kilograms of TNT exploded Monday in a predominantly Shiite neighbourhood in the morning rush hour, wounding 120 others. No one claimed responsibility for the bombing, the deadliest in six years and a violent setback to government efforts to restore law and order after 15 years of civil war. "That explosion was a message to several sides. It's a message to the oppressed... it's a message from Israel to ascertain that it does not want security in Lebanon," Sheikh Fadlallah said. "As for America, it had talked about Lebanon regarding the (Western) hostages. The hostages were released but the servant's sons were not," Sheikh Fadlallah added. That was a reference to some 200 mainly Shiite prisoners held by Israel and its proxy militia in South Lebanon.

Jordanian team heads for bilaterals today as planned

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's delegation to the Middle East peace talks was set to leave Amman for Washington early this morning following His Majesty King Hussein's reiteration Thursday of Jordan's commitment to the peace process. "We seek a just and honourable peace," the King said. "And we will continue to work for the achievement of that kind of peace," the King said. However, Palestinians said Friday they had suspended plans to travel to Washington (see separate story). The Palestinian decision came after an Israeli decision to expel 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories. Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber confirmed that the Jordanian party to the talks was leaving early this morning according to earlier plans. Dr. Abu Jaber, however, said that Israel's decision to expel 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories was "an injustice on at

least three levels: human, legal and political," and lacked logical reasoning "unless Israel is trying to torpedo the peace talks." "It is my hope that the Israelis will revoke their decision and reconsider especially that they proclaim that they are asking for peace," Dr. Abu Jaber said in a telephone interview. The foreign minister said that expulsions are a "tragedy" on the human level because it cuts people from their jobs, family, friends and gravely affects their feelings. "People do not usually associate the human aspect to these political acts." The expulsions, he added, are not only "illegal" but politically "this decision has been taken with a nasty and bad timing and ignores the wishes of the entire world." Jordan's chief negotiator Abdul Salam Majali said the Kingdom's delegation was to depart Amman according to schedule even though the Palestinian party to the talks had suspended its plans to go to Washington pending a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) decision on a

possible boycott of the said talks. "We are going to Washington according to schedule," Dr. Majali told the Jordan Times. Jordanian delegates, speaking on condition of anonymity, dismissed the possibility of cancelling their plans to leave this morning as a show of solidarity with the Palestinian position. "It is too late for us to change plans for our departure today," a senior delegate told the Jordan Times. "The decision to expel the 12 Palestinians was taken a few days back. Yet we were not aware of any decision to protest it until today... this leaves the matter until the last minute which is of course difficult," the delegate said. Although there were predictions that the Washington talks could be delayed pending a Palestinian decision to participate, Jordanian delegates expressed optimism that the impasse in talks with Israel last month could be solved "within the first three days of the second round of talks." Dr. Majali said he remained "eternally optimistic, although

the road to peace will be long." He told the Jordan Times that Jordan was "determined not to be a hurdle in the way of peace and will not be provoked by Israeli tactics." "If we want to gain our rights and retrieve our lands we have to be prepared to suffer and struggle for a long time," Dr. Majali added. In his comments Thursday, King Hussein said that although Arab coordination concerning the peace process was much below what Jordan had hoped for, "objectives in general are the same." "We will continue to seek the required coordination," the King said. The King was speaking after a visit he paid to the Prime Ministry to inquire about conditions in the Kingdom following the snow storm that affected the country in the last two days. Syria has so far insisted that it would not participate in the multilateral talks scheduled for Moscow on Jan. 28-29 unless

(Continued on page 3)

5 Iraqi children killed in mine blast

BAGHDAD (R) — Three sisters and their two brothers were killed in southern Iraq when mines dropped by allied aircraft during the Gulf war exploded, the Iraqi News Agency said on Friday. The children were aged between three and seven. The agency did not say when or how the mines were set off. It said the mines exploded in a village near the city of Nassiriyeh.

Russian helicopter lands at Miami

MIAMI (AP) — A Russian helicopter apparently fleeing Cuba with men, women and children aboard landed Friday morning at a suburban airport, authorities said. "There are men, women and children aboard," said Metro-Dade police spokesman George Reyes. The aircraft touched down at Tamiami airport, a public strip for small aircraft about 15 kilometres southwest of Miami international airport. The helicopter and those aboard were handed over to the U.S. Customs Service, Mr. Reyes said. He did not know how many people were aboard and had no further details. Customs spokesmen said they were still investigating and had no immediate comment.

Egypt-Estonia set up diplomatic relations

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt and Estonia have agreed to establish diplomatic relations, they said in a joint statement issued Friday. Estonian Foreign Minister Lemar Meri and Mohammad Al Agiza, Egypt's ambassador to Finland, signed the agreement Thursday night at Estonia's embassy in the Finnish capital Helsinki. Egypt recognised Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia after they regained independence from the former Soviet Union last year. Estonia is the first to have diplomatic ties with Egypt, which will be at ambassador level.

Car pile-ups in Italy kills 8

MILAN (AP) — A 50-car pileup closed Italy's busiest highway Friday just hours after it was reopened following a gigantic chain of collisions that left seven people dead and 110 injured. Police said at least one person was killed and six injured in the latest pileup that forced them to close the fog-shrouded "Superhighway of the Sun" between Milan and Piacenza. The highway was closed earlier for 16 hours after a chain of collisions involving nearly 300 cars along a 50-kilometre stretch south of Milan, between Piacenza and Parma, killed seven people and injured 110 others.

PLO seen seeking U.S. pressure on Israel, U.N. role

By Landa K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Palestinian part of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation has delayed its trip to Washington amid reports that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is considering a boycott of the third round of Israeli-Arab peace talks. The delay is a last-minute attempt to bring the U.S. as the main sponsor of the talks, to pressure Israel to stop its escalating iron-fist policy against Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories. The final straw proved to be an Israeli order to expel 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories. The Palestinian team declared on Friday morning that it was delaying its trip in response to the deportation orders. But information available to the Jordan Times and official PLO statements indicated that the Palestinians were seriously debating a potential boycott of the talks. "The deportation order is a mercy bullet in the heart of the peace process," said PLO spokesman Ahmad Abdul Rahman on Friday.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat Friday called for an urgent session of the U.N. Security Council to discuss the Israeli measures. Palestinian officials said if the Security Council convenes, it will be viewed as an encouraging signal to send the Palestinian delegation to Washington. It appears that the PLO is using the delay of Palestinian delegations' trip to Washington to secure the convening of the Security Council and to ensure a bigger role for the U.N. in the peace process. PLO officials said that so far the organisation has not decided to boycott the talks. The PLO was evidently using the delay as a last-minute pressure tactic to pressure Washington to take a firmer position towards Israel, but it left the door open for options if its tactic failed. "The PLO will try to delay the talks for at least two days just to make a point that Palestinians cannot be taken for granted and cannot be expected just to continue making concessions," said an official Palestinian source. The talks were expected to

(Continued on page 5)

Palestinians freeze Washington travel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian negotiators said Friday they have suspended plans to go to peace talks in Washington because of Israel's decision to expel 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories.

A statement read by Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi appealed to the United States to make the Israeli government "nullify this grave breach of international law." It said the delegation would wait for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to make a decision on future participation on the peace talks. Ehud Gol, a spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, said in response: "I will not relate to Palestinian travel plans. The Israeli delegation will be arriving in Washington on time. We will go to Washington to continue the talks to reach peace." The Palestinian statement, read to reporters after the Palestinian negotiating team conferred for two hours, said: "The Palestinian delegation views this latest development with utmost seriousness and grave alarm. We have therefore suspended our plans to travel to Washington D.C., pending the decision of the legitimate political leadership of the Palestinian people, the PLO, which is currently meeting to evaluate these developments and which will announce the appropriate decision in due time."

Answering questions, Dr. Ashrawi said she expected the PLO to make a decision later Friday.

The Israelis announced Thursday night they would expel 12 Palestinians allegedly active in violent anti-Israeli activity. They cited an upsurge in violence in the occupied territories in recent months in which four Jewish settlers have been killed. But Dr. Ashrawi's statement said the expulsions were "a continuation of Israel's destructive policy designed to torpedo the peace process." It urged the United States to "fulfill its explicit responsibilities to both the peace process and its own official policies" and make the Israelis reverse the decision. The delegation was to have left for Amman Friday en route to Washington where talks were expected to resume next week. At Israeli insistence, PLO members have been barred from participating in the peace talks, but PLO officials advised the Palestinian delegates during the Madrid conference that began Oct. 30, and at talks last month in Washington. The Israeli army meanwhile announced the names of 12 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip it has slated for expulsion: Iyad Aj Hami Abdul Raof Joda — a Gazan currently living

(Continued on page 3)



WILL I SLIP? Three children, two of them barefooted, venture out Friday to the still snow-clad 'Altan

Archbishop of Canterbury arrives in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, spiritual head of the Church of England, flew in Friday at the start of a six-day visit to Jordan and Israel as well as the occupied territories. The main purpose of his Middle East trip is an official visit to occupied Jerusalem starting Sunday to mark the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, his office said. The Jerusalem church is a province of the Worldwide Anglican Communion which Archbishop Carey leads. The archbishop will celebrate a second Christmas day on Monday with the Greek Orthodox Church in Bethlehem. On Tuesday he is scheduled to meet with Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

In Jordan Friday and Saturday he was to hold talks with Anglican clergy and others and visit a school for the deaf. The archbishop planned to give two news conferences, in Amman on Saturday and in Jerusalem on Wednesday. He will fly home from Tel Aviv late Wednesday. Archbishop Carey, 56, was enthroned in his cathedral in April as the 103rd archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Carey's office said he would meet members of the Jordanian royal family, representatives of the Israeli government, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and Palestinian leaders. Archbishop Carey said upon his arrival in Amman Friday night that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was of great importance. He added that there was a tremendous need to support the efforts being exerted to attain peace in the region in a way that would guarantee the return of the rights to its rightful owners. Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, the British ambassador to Jordan and a number of Christian religious leaders welcomed the archbishop at the airport.

West said to drop plan to 'punish' Libya

CAIRO (Agencies) — The United States, Britain and France have shelved a drive for U.N. sanctions or other punitive action against Libya over bombings of U.S. and France airliners that killed 440 people, Foreign Ministry sources said Friday. Ambassadors of the three Western powers relayed the decision in separate meetings on Thursday with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa and Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid. Egypt has made strenuous efforts to persuade the Western allies not to carry out military reprisals against Libya. The envoys told the officials their governments would press instead for a U.N. Security Council resolution urging Libya to respond to charges it was involved in the bombings of a Pan Am Jumbo jet over Scotland and a French UTA airliner over Niger. Washington and London

(Continued on page 3)

Scrapping of Algerian election results possible

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Election officials Friday assessed the option of scrapping results of a parliamentary vote won by Islamic fundamentalists, disclosing that challenges had been filed in more than 75 per cent of the races. The challenges, submitted to an official review board, could give new life to anti-fundamentalists, who Thursday marched through Algiers chanting pro-democracy slogans in one of the biggest demonstrations since independence from France in 1962. Crowd estimates ranged from 300,000 to 800,000. Authorities said Friday that results have been appealed for at least 341 seats contested in last week's first-round vote for the 430-member parliament, throwing the overall finish into question. If the appeals are upheld, authorities may be forced to scrap some of the results of the Dec. 26 balloting and call a new round of at least some elections. The vast majority of the appeals are against the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a landslide winner last week with 188 seats won outright, just 28 short of a majority. The fundamentalists are accused of intimidation, tricking illiterate voters into casting ballots for their party, and other irregularities. The FIS is running for most of the 199 seats to be decided in a run-off vote Jan. 16. It is expected to win most of them. The front would thus be the biggest loser if the Constitutional Council, the body overseeing the election, scraps some or all of the challenged results. The council has until the end of next week to render a verdict. If it invalidates results in the Dec. 26 contest, a new round of elections could be held within three months. The fundamentalists oppose alcohol consumption, employment of women and educational schools.

Jordan condemns Israeli move U.S., Britain and France join denunciation of Israeli decision to expel 12 Palestinians from occupied lands

AMMAN (J.T.) — Israel's decision to expel 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories was condemned by Jordan and several Arab countries Friday. Jordan denounced the Israeli decision as "a continuation of Israeli measures aimed at aborting the peace process, which enjoys international backing." In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber said "such provocative measures should place the entire world, particularly the United States, face-to-face with their responsibility to counter such irresponsible Israeli measures, which contravene international charters and conventions, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention."

Dr. Abu Jaber added that Israel was planning to foil the peace process through taking such measures. "Failure of the conference will reflect negatively not only on the countries of the region but also on the entire world," he said. "The international community should embark on the necessary actions to force Israel to respect international legitimacy and the international community's will, which advocates the establishment of just and durable peace in the region," Dr. Abu Jaber said. He said Israel plans to foil the peace process by intensifying its settlement activity, by desecrating holy places and escalating oppressive measures against the Palestinian people. These actions, he said, will not make Jordan more resolved to shoulder its responsibilities towards the peoples of the region and the international community and to work seriously towards finding a just and durable solution to the Middle East problems. Dr. Abu Jaber voiced hope that the Israeli government could realise that "there is no alternative to the option of peace and will stop carrying out its plans aimed at aborting the peace process."

U.S. strongly decries Israeli step

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States on Friday "strongly condemned" Israel for its decision to expel 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories. The decision led Palestinian peace negotiators to suspend their departure for Washington where they were to resume Middle East peace talks with Israel next week. In an unusually strongly-worded statement, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "The United States strongly condemns the Israeli government's decision to deport Palestinians. We have urged Israel at the highest levels to reconsider and to rescind this decision." Mr. Boucher said the United States opposes expulsion as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention which governs the behaviour of occupying powers. But he said the United States still believed Palestinians ought to come to Washington and resume peace talks and was urging them to do so. Mr. Boucher also condemned the killing of a Jewish settler in the Gaza Strip which Israel said had provoked its decision to expel the 12. Of the Palestinians to be expelled, eight are from the Gaza Strip and four from the West Bank. According to a military state-

(Continued on page 5)

Israel gave Syria hint of withdrawal — diplomats

CAIRO (R) — Israel gave Syria a guarded hint at recent peace talks in Washington that it might contemplate withdrawing from some occupied Arab territory, according to diplomats close to the talks.

They said that Israel, while maintaining publicly that it will not give up an inch of land, told Syria it accepted that it was inadmissible to acquire territory by force and that boundaries should be settled by negotiation.

The Syrians "took this as an opening through which they could drive a truck," one diplomat said. Syria's key goal in the talks is to recover the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in the 1967 war.

The diplomats said Israel and Palestinians had also come close to resolving the procedural dispute which kept them arguing in a corridor at the State Department for six days, unable to agree who should sit in which room to start negotiations.

The diplomats said Israel gave Syria its hint on withdrawal during a debate in which each side explained its interpretation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories and for all states in the region to have "secure" and recognised boundaries.

The resolution is the accepted

basis for the current peace process, launched at a historic conference in Madrid in October.

One diplomat said the Israelis "did engage with the Syrians to try to reach a common interpretation of 242."

He said the Israeli interpretation was that "the concept of acquiring territory by force is totally rejected," but that Israel was assured of the need for secure boundaries, which implied the need for negotiations over territory.

Whatever agreement was reached on frontiers, "it will not be acquiring territory by force and therefore it will be legally acceptable to everyone."

Another diplomat said the Israelis "have not made this view public, but they dare not."

He added that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin "would not have entered these negotiations had he not been prepared in principle to return at least a certain amount of land under certain conditions."

Mr. Shamir said a week ago in a speech to 3,000 members of his Likud Party that the mission of Israel's negotiators was to achieve peace without giving up land.

The Israeli-Palestinian argument revolved around the extent to which the Palestinian delega-

tion would have a separate identity in the negotiations.

The Palestinians are officially part of a joint delegation with the Jordanians but it was agreed in Madrid that there would be separate Palestinian and Jordanian "tracks" in the talks.

In Washington, the Israelis accused the Palestinians of wanting to have a totally separate delegation. The Palestinians charged the Israelis with backing down on the Madrid deal.

In the end, one diplomat said, both sides returned to the precise formula agreed in Madrid.

Nabil Shaath, a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and one of the architects of the Palestinian negotiating position, said: "We came very close at the end to defining the ground rules."

The diplomat said there had been "some specific substantive progress" in the Israeli-Lebanese talks but details were being kept secret.

Diplomatic sources said before the Washington talks that the United States had suggested an Israeli-backed militia should hand over the town of Jezzine in South Lebanon to the Lebanese army as a first step towards a total Israeli withdrawal from territory on the Lebanese side of the border.



SEASON FOR ALL: An elderly man poses for a photo against the backdrop of snow as (below) three children play in the white expanse of a park in Amman (photos by Youssef Al 'Allan).



Bashir: Liberalisation will heal Sudan economy

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's military leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir says his country will not rely on foreign aid and that economic liberalisation is the only way to solve its problems.

In an year-end interview with the official Sudan News Agency, Lieutenant-General Bashir pledged his government would put an end to the war-torn and famine-stricken country's economic problems by the middle of 1993.

He said Sudan, currently saddled with foreign debt of more than \$13 billion, had to rely on its own resources because foreign aid was never guaranteed.

More than one million people in southern Sudan are suffering from the effects of drought and an eight-year rebellion by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), fighting to end the domination of the mainly Christian and animist south by the Muslim, Arabised north.

Liberalisation of the economy was the only way Sudan's problems could be solved, Gen. Bashir said.

"Some quarters have imagined we will not make it by suspending economic assistance to Sudan, but our self-reliance policies have proved the contrary," Gen. Bashir said.

Sudan has debts of more than \$13 billion, about \$2 billion of them owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

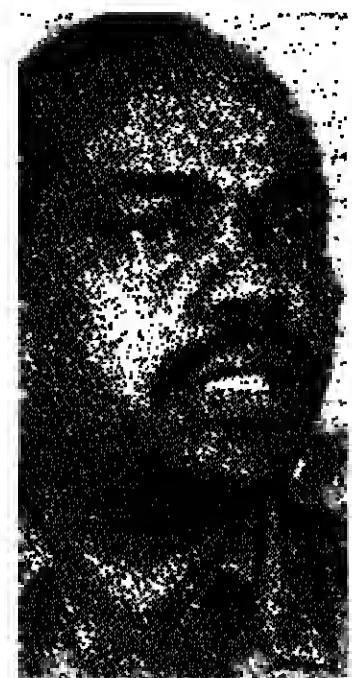
The IMF declared Sudan bankrupt in 1986 and opened the way for its expulsion in 1990 by declaring it uncooperative.

Gen. Bashir blamed his economic problems on the previous civilian government and warned that tackling them would require uncomfortable austerity measures.

He said his government had taken a number of steps to lessen their impact through the establishment of social security funds and increasing aid to the poor.

Sudan has devalued its currency twice since Gen. Bashir took power in a bloodless coup in June 1989.

The government has lifted subsidies on several commodities, including sugar and oil, and plans to remove subsidies from bread in the next few weeks.



Omar Hassan Al Bashir

Gen. Bashir said one million families, an estimated 10 million of Sudan's 20 million people, would be self-sufficient by the end of a 10-year plan his government was currently working on.

He said small farmers were currently receiving subsidies from the Agricultural Bank in a bid to "raise their income which will reflect in the overall national economy."

He said the food gap in Sudan over the past year had been even more serious than in the famine year of 1984, but added that incentive policies for farmers and introduction of irrigation would help contain shortages.

Sudan's Agriculture Minister Ahmad Geneif said last week this season's sorghum production stood at three million tonnes, compared with annual requirement of 2.4 million tonnes.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation said last week at least 13 million people in Sudan and neighbouring Ethiopia were facing hunger due to civil wars and drought.

It said food production rose in Sudan in 1991 but the two countries would need 1.5 million tonnes of food aid in 1992.

Turkish avalanche kills 21

HAKKARI, Turkey (Agencies) — Rescue workers digging in a village struck by an avalanche recovered the bodies of three more people, raising the number of victims to 19, a local official said Friday.

The avalanche buried eight houses Thursday in the village of Karabey in far south-eastern Turkey near the borders with Iraq and Iran.

Workers uncovered 16 bodies on Thursday. The local official said one villager was still missing and that 15 people were injured.

Another avalanche killed two rescue workers Thursday night who were trying to clear a road about 50 kilometres west of Karabey.

The region has been in the grip of a cold wave accompanied by heavy snowfall for the past two months. Hundreds of villages in eastern Turkey have been cut off.

Snow drifts of up to four metres caused power cuts in some parts of the mountainous eastern and south-eastern Turkey.

Snow blocked roads in the Black Sea region, cutting off about 1,000 villages.

Bad weather forced 13 ships heading from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea to stay outside the Suez Canal on Friday, canal authority sources said.

They said the ships, including seven oil tankers, were barred from transiting the canal because of winds up to 45 kilometres per hour and waves as high as three metres.

The ships, which will have to wait for 24 hours to join the next vessels. Fourteen smaller ships sailed southwards.

On Thursday, the captains of eight ships refused to sail through after officials told them they could only go ahead at their own risk.

Canal authority pilots normally guide ships through the 195 kilometre waterway.

U.S.-Soviet aid ends, but arms still plentiful for Afghan war

By John Jennings
The Associated Press

KABUL — To the Americans and the Russians, the cut-off of weapons to the warring factions in Afghanistan marks the end of the superpowers' last proxy war.

But the factions in the civil war remain heavily armed and far apart from a settlement to the 15-year-old conflict.

"The fighting will continue. Brothers will continue to kill brothers," said Shargha Khan, a 25-year-old Kabul University student who lost part of his left leg in a rocket attack on the capital three months ago.

"Afghanistan was the baby of the cold war. Now that the cold war has ended, nobody cares about the baby," Mr. Khan said.

In December 1979, Moscow sent the first of an estimated 115,000 troops into Afghanistan to prop up successive communist governments and to help crush a growing rebellion among the traditional, independent-minded Muslims in the countryside.

The United States and its allies poured in more than \$2 billion in weapons, ammunition and supplies to the Mujahedeen.

It would be the deadliest and costliest conflict of 1980s. At least 1.5 million Afghans are dead, more than three million maimed and more than five million — one-third of this country's pre-war population — living in exile.

More than 13,000 Soviet soldiers also died. Under a U.N.-sponsored accord, the Kremlin withdrew the last troops in February 1989.

Moscow and Washington continued to arm their clients, but neither side proved capable of winning an outright military victory.

Washington and Moscow agreed in mid-1991 to stop all arms shipments by Jan. 1 and give

their clients what they had been demanding for years — to be left alone to decide Afghanistan's future among themselves.

"We have been asking for this. Both sides should stop interfering in our internal affairs. This will help us solve the Afghan problem," said Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the most hardline of the seven rebel leaders who have headquarters in neighbouring Pakistan and the most determined to set up an Islamic government in Kabul.

The weapons shipments actually stopped weeks before the Jan. 1 deadline. Washington delivered the last arms shipment to rebels in October, while Moscow sent in the last giant plane load two weeks ago.

But neither side is short of firepower. Both President Najibullah's government and the rebels have enough arms and ammunition to keep fighting for two more years.

Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan are not bound by the U.S.-Soviet agreement to stop supplies to the rebels and most observers are convinced they would not.

Riyadh, Tehran and Islamabad continue to support their favourite parties that are sympathetic to their individual interests and support their quest to become the dominant power in the region.

If the rebels continue to receive weapons, members of the Kabul government say they will have no choice but to look for other suppliers.

The most likely would be India, the only democratic country to recognise the communist government that seized power in an April 1978 coup and a faithful ally since.

Diplomatic sources speaking on condition of anonymity say China also has secretly offered to sell arms to President Najibullah's government. Beijing sup-

ported the Mujahedeen throughout the Soviet occupation but now fear the Afghan radicals might one day try to strip up trouble in China's western provinces.

Mr. Najibullah, the former secret police chief who was installed by the Soviets as president in 1986, wouldn't say what he'd do if the rebels continue to receive arms. He, instead, prefers to talk about peace and has offered to negotiate with his opponents anywhere, anytime and any place.

"This government has demonstrated enormous concessions and flexibility," said Mr. Najibullah in an interview with the Associated Press. "We have relinquished the monopoly on power and developed a proposal for a coalition government. What has the other side offered?"

Although the rebels have been holding secret talks with the government for years, they refuse to sit at the negotiating table with Mr. Najibullah and insist peace will come only when he resigns.

But most observers, including the Americans, contend Mr. Najibullah's resignation could cause a bloodbath because there is no one capable of taking power.

The rebel leaders are themselves hopelessly divided, equally ambitious and considered by most Afghans to be just as unacceptable as Mr. Najibullah.

More and more, Afghans are looking to Zahir Shah, the 77-year-old former king who was overthrown while in Italy in 1973 and has lived in a Roman village ever since.

So far, he has showed no inclination to return to his war-weary country.

"The problem with Afghanistan is that everyone wants to be king but the king himself," said one European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

U.N. mediating team arrives in Mogadishu

NAIROBI (AP) — A U.N. team arrived in Somalia's war-ravaged capital Friday to seek an end to seven weeks of brutal clan fighting.

James Jonah, the U.N. under-secretary for African affairs, led the five-member team that flew to Mogadishu from Nairobi. The team included two representatives each from the Rome-based World Food Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

UNICEF spokesman Carlton James said the team landed in Mogadishu without incident and immediately began talks with General Mohammad Farrah Aided, chairman of the United Somali Congress (USC), who controls the southern part of Mogadishu.

Mr. Jonah was later to travel by road to northern Mogadishu for talks with President Ali Mahdi Mohammad.

Forces loyal to the two leaders have been locked in a vicious struggle for control of the seaside capital since Nov. 17.

Mr. Jonah said Mr. Jonah also was seeking guarantees from the warring factions that they would allow relief workers to freely care for the wounded and the hungry.

Medical supplies, food and fuel have been in short supply and constant artillery and mortar shelling has hampered the distribution of the little that humanitarian organisations have managed to deliver to the devastated city.

Last month, two workers of the

International Committee of the Red Cross were killed while distributing food to the city's four hospitals.

The United Nations says up to 20,000 people have been killed or wounded in the fighting, mostly women and children.

The handful of international humanitarian groups which have maintained workers in Mogadishu put the figure somewhat lower, estimating between 5,000 and 6,000 dead and 8,000 wounded.

Former U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar assigned Mr. Jonah to the peace mission Dec. 28, a month after the fighting began.

The U.S. State Department, among others, had criticised the United Nations for its delay in seeking an end to the war that even Mr. Perez de Cuellar described as "a nightmare of violence."

UNICEF, the last U.N. agency in Mogadishu, relocated to Nairobi in September, when the power struggle between Gen. Aided and Mr. Ali Mahdi first erupted into three days fighting.

A truce arranged by clan elders collapsed after one month.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar ordered UNICEF back into the city in late December and it has maintained a four-member team there for a little over a week.

The congress chased President Mohammad Siad Barre from Mogadishu in January following a month of fighting that left much of the city in ruins.

U.S. probes possible Israeli bribery bid over jet sales

CLEVELAND (AP) — The U.S. government has been investigating attempts by Israeli military officers to solicit bribes from American companies selling military hardware to the Jewish state, a newspaper reported Friday.

The plain dealer said it had obtained court documents outlining "a massive criminal fraud investigation into sale of General Electric (GE) Co. jet engines to the Israeli air force."

GE disclosed in 1990 that it was investigating the bribery allegations. At the time, Israel had announced that prosecutors had agreed to a plea bargain by a senior Israeli air force officer accused of accepting millions of dollars in bribes while purchasing U.S.-made military equipment.

According to the paper, the alleged fraud was part of a broader scheme by unnamed Israeli air force officers seeking bribes from GE and other American military contractors.

The investigation started in late 1990, according to sealed documents filed last year by Justice Department lawyers in Cincinnati

federal court and obtained by the paper this week.

According to the documents, the criminal inquiry involves the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Defence Criminal Investigative Service and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The State Department has been enlisted to obtain cooperation from Israeli authorities and Switzerland, where money has been traced to Swiss banks.

"Available evidence indicates that General Electric aircraft engines may have engaged in a fraud that was part of a broader scheme by certain Israeli air force officials to solicit bribes from U.S. companies, and to divert foreign military sales funds of unauthorised uses," Shelley R. Slade, a lawyer in the Justice Department's commercial litigation branch, said in a previously sealed court document.

Bruce Bunch, a spokesman at GE's corporate headquarters in Fairfield, Connecticut, told the paper that the company acted quickly to notify U.S. authorities of "concerns" about its jet engine sales to Israel.

Cyprus protests Turkish minister's visit to north

NICOSIA (AP) — Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin arrived in Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus Friday, prompting a formal protest to the United Nations by the Cyprus government.

Government spokesman Akis Fantis said the protest was made both directly to the U.N. secretary-general and to the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Speaking to reporters on arrival at Ercan airport, in the Turkish-controlled north, Mr. Cetin reaffirmed Turkey's support for the Turkish Cypriots.

Mr. Cetin became the first high-ranking Turkish official to visit the north since the establishment of a new Turkish government following last October's elections.

He told reporters at Ercan that

there would be no policy changes regarding the Cyprus issue under Turkey's new coalition government led by Premier Suleyman Demirel.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when an Athens-backed coup by Greek Cypriot supporters of union with Greece prompted a Turkish invasion.

Mr. Cetin said a solution to the Cyprus problem could be found only if it was accepted that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots enjoyed equal political rights.

Konstantinos Atakli, the foreign minister of the break-away Turkish Cypriot state established in the Turkish-occupied region, also said that there would be no peace on the island until self-determination and sovereignty rights of the Turkish Cypriots were recognised.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Le Chevalier de Labyrinth
18:30 Soudan Cauche
19:00 News in French
19:15 Fusion
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 "an Funnist Home Video"
21:00 Encounter
21:30 Life on the Land
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Red Knight, White Knight"

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
06:16 Sunrise (Samar) Dhuhr
11:26 Dhuhr
14:12 Asr
16:36 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810700
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrence Church Tel. 622666

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 623883, Tel. 626542

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712561

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151

Armenian International Church Tel. 685236

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823264, 659932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 673691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold, cloudy and rainy at times. Winds will be southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy and rainy at times, and winds will southerly fresh and strong calm. Min./Max. temp. Amman 3/5 Aqaba 10/17

Deserts

3/10 Jordan Valley 9/15

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 97 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 748364
Dr. Kayed Isayaga 793522
Dr. Mohamed Nadeem 693925
Dr. Tawfik Oub'le 632029
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Anwar pharmacy 676555
Nairoudh pharmacy 636672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shawabeh pharmacy 637660
ERD:
Dr. Mohammad Al Za'bi 63101
Al Shamsa pharmacy 275825

ZARQA:

Dr. Hisham Misch 984417
Khalifeh pharmacy 984417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 611111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 611111
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637177
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 715121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 636321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television

773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636361

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldid Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 664114
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845945
Al-Munasher Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 6661237
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Mahajreh 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marfa 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 6024050
Amn Hospital 674153
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)900560

Ibn Sin Hospital (09)980732

Al-Hikmah Modern Hospital (09)99090

ERD:

Princess Basmah Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal

King stresses importance of multilaterals, calls for united Arab stand

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday said that the multilateral talks are of great importance, maybe even more important in terms of attendance and participation than the international peace conference that Jordan has been calling for during the last two years.

A large number of countries will take part in this conference, the King said, and it may be possible to discuss issues pertaining to Arab citizenship and the Palestinian citizens and their rights.

There are many things that need to be addressed, particularly when it comes to details of the talks, the King said. He pointed out that Jordan was discussing with other Arab nations all issues of interest and voiced hope that the outcome would be good.

Answering a question whether a pan-Arab meeting will be held prior to the beginning of multilateral talks, the King said: "Should the opportunity arise, we would be ready. We are advocates of meetings and inter-Arab cooperation in all circumstances and cases," he said.

The King added that "we have called for such a meeting, but meet with whom?"

If other Arab nations want such a meeting, Jordan will participate because it has been calling for top-level meetings even before the Madrid peace conference and the Washington talks, he said.

Asked whether there is a relation between the bilaterals and multilaterals, the King said he doesn't think so. However, he noted, the Washington bilaterals are the starting point.

"Let's wait and see what the results of the second round of talks are," the King said.

He pointed out that the Jordanian delegation to the bilateral talks will soon leave to pursue the talks in Washington and voiced hope that results will be positive.

"We have said more than once that we are peace-seekers, but we seek a just and honourable peace

which the future generations will accept and safeguard," he said. "These are the limits of our move and we will continue to work to achieve this kind of just peace that ensures the restoration of rights to their owners in this region and the whole world."

The King voiced hope that the Arab World would advance in that direction and that Jordan would become an example for its Arab brothers.

The King pointed out that Jordan is working to achieve inter-Arab integration and cooperation on the basis of full respect by Arab nations for each other and inter-Arab cooperation to achieve the welfare of all peoples.

"We lived the last year, the year of shocks, and saw the picture of the world changing so quickly that no one would expect I believe that we have a scope and new givings for work and reconstruction," he said.

The King added that Jordan has witnessed the end of dictatorship, autocracy, one-party rule and politicised armed forces. It has entered the era of democracy and responsibility sharing, he said.

"Our country, praise be to God, is much bigger than its geographic area thanks to our achievements and to the public participation which God willing will turn our country into a good example," he said.

Asked about inter-Arab coordination prior to the multilateral talks, the King said "we have from the very beginning called for such coordination and we do not believe that what has been done so far is what we wished."

The King pointed out that coordination means that Arab brothers should work together to crystallise a certain policy to be agreed upon by all parties concerned. The King said that coordination is still way below what Jordan was expecting and this places additional responsibilities on the Kingdom to achieve the desired coordination.



As His Majesty King Hussein confers with advisors on rescue and clean up operations, Jordanians tried to deal with the cold and the heavy snowfall of the last three days (Photos by Youssef Al 'Abd).

As storm breaks up, Kingdom begins to recover, survey damage

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The cold front which affected Jordan over the past three days has ended but the Kingdom will remain under the effect of very cold winds blowing from the polar regions Saturday with isolated showers of rain falling in the northern and central regions, the Department of Meteorology announced Friday.

A department spokesman told the Jordan Times that the southern regions of Jordan were still receiving snow and rain, but the depression was passing out and no others were expected until next Monday.

The official said that in Tafleh snow was two metres deep while in Shobak it was estimated to be one and a half metres.

Although the storm is over, the country will be affected by frost and sleet in the next two days until the snow has melted, the official said. He added that while temperatures drop to be-

low zero at night they could reach 8° Celsius Saturday.

The snow storm and the rains of the past three days brought a blessing to Jordan, with its dam and underground reservoirs being replenished, according to Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wisbah.

He told the Jordan Times that by noon Friday there were an estimated 61 million cubic metres of water in the King Talal Dam. The dam could reach its 85 million cubic metre capacity once the snow has melted, he said.

As to the other dams, Dr. Wisbah said that the Wadi Al Arab Dam has 8.2 million cubic metres, half of its capacity, while the Shariabli Dam has 1.6 million cubic metres. He said the Wadi Shueib and Kafra dams, which have 2.5 and 3.3 million cubic metres respectively, are full.

His Majesty King Hussein has been in constant touch with the Public Security Department (PSD) and the Civil De-

fence Department (CDD) giving directives about assistance to the public.

On Friday, the King called CDD Director Afif Al Gboul to inquire about the situation and the measures being taken by his teams around the clock to offer rescue and other vital services to the public. King Hussein voiced his satisfaction with the various services.

Also Friday, King Hussein called Major-General Abdul Rahman Al Udwan, acting PSD director, to express his deep satisfaction with the level of services offered to the public in cooperation with other government departments. He later called Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb to express similar sentiments.

King Hussein Thursday visited the Prime Ministry and discussed with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and other ministers the current level of services offered by government agencies to the public in various regions. King Hussein heard a briefing on

services being carried out and was reassured about the supply and fuel situation in Jordan.

Based on a directive from the King, the Armed Forces sent equipment to the south to help clear roads, Petra said.

Present at the meeting was Chief of the Royal Court Adnan Abu Odeh, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, Minister of State Jamal Al Khreisha and Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali, head of the Jordanian-Palestinian joint delegation to the Middle East peace talks in Washington.

For his part, the Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Friday followed up his instructions to the various concerned departments to intensify their efforts and offer the best services especially to the people in the governorates of Tafleh, Ma'an, Karak, Jerash and Ajloun, where the blizzard was been most severe.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, electric-

ity and telephone communications were disrupted in some of these regions. Petra did not report any casualties as a result of the storm.

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Friday quoted the CDD as reporting the deaths of five people in Tafleh Governorate as a result of the weather conditions. The report said that three others had been reported missing but were later rescued by the CDD team. It said that the CDD and Armed Forces, which were involved in reopening roads and rescuing people besieged by snow or floods, have rescued 400 citizens and offered treatment to 249 others injured in the storm. The CDD also put out 28 fires in various governorates, the report noted.

The CDD and the PSD reported numerous billy roads closed as well as main roads linking towns in the Ajloun-Jerash area in the north and the Tafleh-Ma'an regions in the south.

In Aqaba, the Coast Guard was reported to have rescued 400 passengers on board a passenger ship employed to commute travellers from Aqaba to Sinai. The ship was reported to have listed as a result of the severe winds and storm and was in danger of breaking up after hitting the coral reefs at the bottom of the Red Sea coast. No casualties were reported.

Jordan Television showed viewers scenes of Bedouin tents in the southern region completely cut off by the snow from the rest of the towns and villages. The CDD moved the Bedouins with their animals and tents to safer areas.

The Queen Alia International Airport was reopened after temporary closure due to the snow and aircraft were landing and taking off on schedule Friday.

Minister of Agriculture Faysal Al Khasawneh expressed hope that the agricultural season this year will be excellent following several years of drought which adversely affected production.

King wishes Arab leaders happy new year

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday called Syrian President Hafez Assad to congratulate him on the new year and wished him continued good health and happiness and the Syrian people further progress and prosperity.

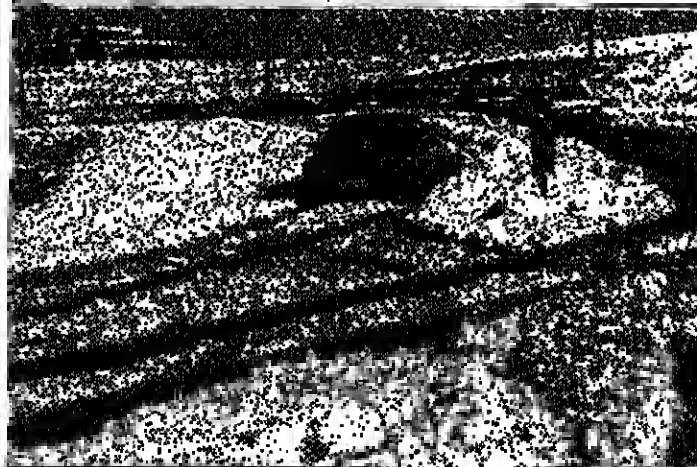
The King also exchanged views with President Assad on a number of inter-Arab issues and matters of mutual concern, including the peace process.

Also Thursday, King Hussein received a telephone call from

Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, who congratulated him on the new year.

King Hussein and President Bashir also exchanged views on inter-Arab issues.

In another telephone call, King Hussein wished Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh continued good health and happiness, and the Yemeni people further progress and prosperity and congratulated them on the new year. The King and President Saleh also exchanged views on a number of inter-Arab affairs.



Telephone fees increase to help lower budget deficit

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government has increased charges for installations as well as subscription for telephones to take immediate effect as part of its efforts to reduce the budget deficit.

An official statement said the installation charge for telephone lines to be installed at homes was raised to JD 125 from JD 100 per line and at offices to JD 250 from JD 200.

Subscription charges were raised to JD 28 from JD 24. The charges do not include telephone sets, which the subscriber has to buy separately from the market.

Installation charges for mobile telephones — in cars — were raised to JD 1,500 from JD 1,000 and subscription was raised to JD 700 from JD 500.

The raise comes in line with the government's efforts to reduce the budget deficit, estimated at JD 107 million for 1992.

Officials have said that the government was also considering plans to increase long-distance telephone calls to certain destinations. Further details were not immediately available.

Finance Minister Basel Jaradat told the Lower House of Parliament last week that the government intended to raise certain prices.

He said the government had

shouldered the cost of setting up telecommunications projects and of maintaining and operating them. The charges that are levied by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) were low, he said.

Mr. Jaradat said the government believed that the TCC should get a certain margin of profit from the corporation's operations.

Only high-income groups benefit from the operations that the government has singled out and, therefore, any increase in the cost of such services will not hurt the common man, the minister told the Lower House.

Faced with increasing demands but lack of resources, the TCC is also discussing schemes to involve private sector capital and revive shelved projects envisaged under the 1988-92 National Development Plan.

Under the scheme, the private sector is invited to invest in "revenue-sharing schemes" involving various TCC projects on the basis of specific agreements. Investors will get their money back along with profits throughout a certain agreed-upon period of the life-span of the project, which will then be transferred to complete TCC ownership.

"It is a semi-privatisation scheme," noted an economist. "The marked difference is that the projects will ultimately be totally TCC-owned although

initial investment will not come from the corporation."

According to the TCC, the proffered "build-operate-transfer" projects were incorporated into the 1988-1992 five-year plan after they were found financially viable, but had to be shelved in early 1989 due to the economic difficulties which hit Jordan.

Initial plans called for 240,000 additional telephone lines in the Kingdom. Subsequently, the target was scaled down in the face of lack of funds and then the plans were cancelled altogether after tenders were issued in 1988.

Discussions on some of the specific projects covered in the plans are believed to be progressing well. Few definite details were available.

Studies undertaken by Swedtel, a consultant, and approved by the World Bank had established that these projects would fetch a minimum of 25 per cent return on investments.

The TCC says it will welcome a company or consortium to undertake the implementation of the projects and specifically mentions Mafrak and Maan as two immediate "best-suited" areas. In both governorates, existing TCC networks and equipment are outdated and need complete replacement.

Other projects that are open under the TCC scheme include cellular module telephones, paging systems and pocket switching data network.

Jordanians head for Washington

(Continued from page 1)

some progress was achieved on the bilateral front.

Jordan has always stressed that the multilaterals are of such importance that they could bring in progress in the bilaterals.

"The multilateral talks are very important," King Hussein said. "Some of our brothers might have some notes on them but I believe the talks, as far as participants, are more comprehensive than the international conference we have always called for."

The King said that Jordan was ready to attend any Arab coordination meeting before going to the multilateral talks.

Earlier on Thursday, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker held talks with the head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Farouq Kaddumi.

The talks were attended by the Royal Court Chief Adnan Abu Odeh, Foreign Minister Abu Jaber, Dr. Majali, Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izzeddine and on the Palestinian side by Palestinian Ambassador in Amman Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim.

The two sides agreed to intensify contacts with other Arab parties to reach the highest degree of coordination in the com-

ing stage, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Mr. Kaddumi said after the meeting that the PLO insisted that it be invited to the multilateral talks.

He said the PLO had no objection to holding the talks in Moscow but said there must be coordination "among the Arab parties to remove fears seen by some."

He called for a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Arab states participating in the talks. He also urged the U.S. to resume its suspended dialogue with the PLO.

Mr. Kaddumi left for Syria Friday for coordination and is expected back in Amman in two days.

In Tunis, Yasser Abd Rabbo, advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, said the expulsion of 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories was a "strong blow to peace efforts."

"The Israeli decision is a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention and a challenge to U.N. Security Council resolutions on expulsions," Mr. Abd Rabbo said.

He called on the U.S. administration and the European Community to put an end to "Israel's sabotage efforts."

West said to drop Libya plans

(Continued from page 1)

Libyan Foreign Minister Ibrahim Mohammad Beshari called in foreign diplomats in Tripoli on Thursday and told them his country was "ready to cooperate to clear the truth without affecting its sovereignty or its laws."

The Egyptian sources said the allies would take the issue to the Security Council to seek a resolution calling on Libya to respond to the terrorism charges. U.S. officials had cited a ban on air traffic with Libya and an eventual oil embargo as possibilities.

The Washington Post Friday quoted diplomatic sources as saying the allies had retreated from a push for new sanctions

"after concluding that the 15-member Security Council would not agree to such steps."

"The watered-down approach is expected to be embodied in a Britain-sponsored resolution that probably will be presented to the council next week," the report said.

President George Bush signed a decree on Dec. 26 renewing U.S. economic sanctions against Libya, including a freeze on Libyan assets and a ban on the use of U.S. dollar assets to finance dealings with Libya.

The United States imposed the sanctions in 1986 after 30 people were killed in attacks on Rome and Vienna airport.

Palestinians freed

(Continued from page 1)

in the West Bank town of Al-Bireh, Ghassan Mohammad Suleiman Jarrah of Ramallah in the west Bank; Hassan Abdallah Hassan Shaaban of Rifaat near Ramallah; Ali Fares Hassan Khatab of Ramallah, Omar Nimr Abdul Rahman Safi of Ramallah; Rafat Othman Ali Najjar of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip; Ahmed Hassan Abdallah Abu Sif of Deir Al Balah in the Gaza Strip; Ahmad Mohammad Ali Al Ashgar of Gaza; Marouan Hassan Afane of Gaza; Sami Adia Abu Samhara of Rafah in the Gaza Strip; Ahmad Mohammad Mimar of Khan Younis; and Hajar Afia Khader Mehgez of the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

The daily Maariv quoted a senior Israeli military source as saying the expulsion decision was political, badly timed and likely to "cause serious reactions in the United States."

It was unusual for a military figure to let himself be quoted, even anonymously, as criticising a decision taken at the political level.

Maariv also said that it was unprecedented for expulsions to be publicly announced before the orders were handed to their recipients.

It said this was done to appease right-wingers in the coalition government who had threatened not to back Mr. Shamir in blocking an electoral reform bill Thursday.

The government had already risked the wrath of the right-wing by expelling settlers who had moved into caravans at the place in the Gaza Strip where a settler was killed Wednesday.

Maariv said that following four such killings since the peace talks began in October, Defence Minister Moshe Arens pressed for a larger than usual expulsion. Israel has ousted 67 Palestinians since the uprising against Israeli rule began four years ago. But only once in this period did it order 12 expulsions in one batch.

The United States has appealed to Israel to stop the expulsion policy, saying it harms peace efforts and violates international law.

Tawjihi exams delayed

AMMAN (J.T.) — As expected, in view of the prevailing severe weather conditions, the Ministry of Education announced the postponement of the tawjihi examinations for the mid-year term until Monday.

A total of 73,176 male and female students were affected by the delay of the examinations, which were originally scheduled for Thursday, as a result of the snow fall in most parts of the country and the disruption of lines of communications.

The 11-day examination session, now scheduled to end by Jan. 16, will be taken by students

in the literary, scientific, commercial, agricultural, industrial, hotel management and nursing streams. Students will sit in 971 examination halls and will be supervised by some 9,700 male and female teachers.

The announcement for the postponement of the examinations was made by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi.

The administrations of most Jordanian universities and community colleges made similar announcements to their students, noting that all examinations will now start Monday.

Cardinal of New York to arrive in Jordan today

AMMAN (J.T.) — John O'Connor, the Roman Catholic Cardinal of New York, is due in Jordan today on a two-day visit for discussions on the situation in the Middle East region with His Majesty King Hussein and other officials.

According to Jordan Caritas Director Father Moussa Adeli, the Cardinal will pay a visit to the Jordan Caritas Main Centre in Amman to inspect its activities and humanitarian services to needy Jordanians and Palestinians as well as the Iraqi families still in Jordan.

The Cardinal, who is making the trip to Jordan in the course of a Middle Eastern tour, will be briefed on the humanitarian assistance offered by Jordan to Jordanians and Jordanians in general and Jordan Caritas in particular to nearly one million evacuees, the 300,000 Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates and 150,000 Iraqis who fled the war zone in the Gulf following the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, Father Moussa told the Jordan

Times. He said that the Cardinal, who will be arriving Saturday from Egypt, will discuss the situation in the region with King Hussein before continuing his trip, which will also take him to Syria, Lebanon and Israel.

The Cardinal, according to Father Adeli, is making the trip in his capacity as president of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), which offers humanitarian services to the people of the area irrespective of their faith, origin and affiliation or colour. Father Adeli noted that the Cardinal will assess some of the activities and the current needs of the region where his organisations is able to contribute.

The Cardinal, who made a trip to Jordan in 1987, is going to Rome following his tour in the region for a meeting with his Holiness John Paul II, said Father Adeli. Following his visit here, the Cardinal is going to the occupied West Bank.

Sudanese trade fair to open today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Sudan will open its first ever trade fair in Amman Wednesday to promote trade between Jordan and Sudan.

A statement noted that the fair, which is in observance of Sudan's 36th independence anniversary, is aimed at promot-

ing Sudanese-Jordanian trade links.

The main features of the fair will be agricultural and the items on display include Sudan's livestock and agricultural production, said the embassy statement. It said that the commodities on

display to be sold in retail or wholesale deals include leather and various legumes and fruits produced in Sudan together with a variety of Sudanese handicrafts.

The statement said that the fair will continue for one week.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
 مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephone: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Clash of environment and economics looms at 1992 earth summit

By Catherine Arnst
 Reuter

LONDON — After another year of worsening pollution and ecological crises, global attention will be focused in 1992 on a massive "earth summit" whose goal is nothing less than a treaty to save the world.

But the run-up to the summit, to be held next June in Rio de Janeiro, is already showing the event is as much about economics as the environment.

Green groups, politicians and business executives alike all say the problem is: who will pay to clean up the environment in a world gripped by recession and faced with dwindling resources? Months of behind-the-scenes

negotiations and public meetings keep stumbling over the North-South divide — the clash between heavily polluting developed na-

tries, led by India, are demanding that the northern countries provide huge amounts of aid, easy access to technology and debt

relief. The United States, has neither the money nor the political will to offer such aid.

"The United States is the single most destructive influence blocking progress," on the earth summit, said Jonathon Porritt, former head of Friends of the Earth. That view is echoed time and again by environmentalists.

Both sides of the debate agree that economic progress in the Third World must not be sacrificed to ecological correctness. That is why the underlying theme of the summit is "sustainable development" — industrial progress that does not abuse the environment.

Consequently, summit organisers are treating business leaders and industrial groups as part-

niers rather than adversaries, and the International Chamber of Commerce will stage a three-day industry forum just before the main meeting.

But Maurice Strong, a former oil company executive who is organising the conference on behalf of the United Nations, said the North-South clash could still derail efforts to draw up a comprehensive treaty.

"They are the key in the sense that all the other issues depend to a significant degree on the financial issue and the technology transfer issue," Mr. Strong said. The summit, officially called the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), is expected to attract leaders of 160 countries. It is a successor to a similar international meeting held 20 years ago in Stockholm and also organised by Mr. Strong.

The U.N. is hoping that the Rio meeting from June 1-12 will result in a huge, detailed document to be called Agenda 21. This will spell out the actions all signatories should take to address global warming, preservation of the rain forests, diversity of species, hazardous wastes and just about every other ecological threat the world is facing.

Three preparatory negotiating sessions, called Prepcoms, have been held so far to develop Agenda 21. The fourth and final one is scheduled for New York in March. But by the end of the third Prepcom in Geneva in September, participants were increasingly gloomy over the possibility of a meaningful document.

"I remain hopeful about the earth summit," said Mr. Strong after the Geneva session. "But I am certainly not blindly optimistic."

He said developing countries' claims to technical and financial assistance are not disputed. "Industrialised countries realise this at the level of rhetoric... but the rich countries are today feeling poor and there is a reluctance to make specific commitments."

Some northern countries have been more forthcoming than others, particularly in Europe.

German Environment Minister Klaus Töpel said last month that nations should use the "peace dividend" resulting from an end to the arms race to fund global cleanup.

"We need a new disarmament negotiation process, centred now on decreasing the fight of mankind against nature and against the environment," Mr. Töpel said.

"I am totally convinced that foreign policy in the future will be environmental foreign policy," he said.

And the Italian environment minister, Giorgio Ruffolo, recently proposed that 20 per cent of a new oil tax under consideration by the European Commission be used to finance transfers of energy-saving technology to developing countries.

But the United States has dug in its heels at any suggestion that industrial nations fund environmental protection in the Third World.

In early December Washington refused to join other members of the 24-nation Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in supporting more aid for developing countries to support environmental protection, and came in for pointed criticism as a result.

But U.S. Environmental Protection Agency head William Reilly, at a news conference after the meeting, hinted at a compromise. "When we don't commit ourselves to new and additional resources, it doesn't mean we won't," he said.

Mr. Reilly also warned, however, that the world should not hold out high expectations for the earth summit, saying "there has been more than a little fear that the conference might be a fiasco."

"A group of 77 developing countries, led by India, are demanding that the northern countries provide huge amounts of aid, easy access to technology and debt forgiveness if they want help cleaning up the world. But most of the industrial north, and particularly the United States, has neither the money nor the political will to offer such aid."

Plugging the drains

PRICES OF services provided by the public sector will continue to increase, simply because the public sector is inefficient and can only cover its inefficiency by increasing the fees it requires for these services.

On Wednesday the government increased telephone installation and subscription charges by 25 to 50 per cent. This followed a statement made by the finance minister, Mr. Basel Jarrah, at Parliament while defending his fiscal budget for 1992. He said that the government charges people for capital investment, running costs and depreciation. The minister added that he did not mind if the Telecommunications Corporation also made some profit. This should not be the case. Governments, in the first place, should not be in the business of making profit while providing "services." But the government is in the business of subsidising almost everything. Mr. Jarrah himself criticised the practice of the Treasury subsidising municipal councils which are exclusively in the red. He said that the practice had not helped the councils and only drained the Treasury. But this is exactly why the bureaucrats always manage to devise some sort of new taxes, disguised as fees and indirect taxes. These and other taxes are being devoured by an over-inflated civil service that is, by any conservative estimate, only half as efficient as it should be.

The Telecommunications Corporation and other similar institutions that are draining the Treasury have long been nominated for privatisation, but no concrete move in that direction has been made. The whole socialist system has collapsed but our "socialist" institutions are still holding steadfast. In fact, ministries like the Ministry of Supply are vying even for more control. Does this go along with the spirit of democracy, modernisation and liberalisation? Does it go with His Majesty King Hussein's call on the government to reform the public sector? We do not believe so. We believe that increasing taxes will only burden the people and limit productivity. The government should have opened with a bold move, long overdue, by cutting down its civil service spending which has been allocated 25 per cent of the total 1992 budget.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Friday echoed King Hussein's statement reflecting Jordan's stand with regard to the establishment of peace in the region and said that in his statement to the press Thursday the King has pledged to continue working with all his might for the achievement of a durable peace. The King said that Jordan has strong commitment to honour both to the Palestinians and the other Arab countries and therefore Jordan would be intensifying its consultations and coordination in the coming stage to achieve the aspired goal, said the daily. The paper also underlined the need for solidarity among Arab states at this stage and echoed King Hussein's words that Jordan would set a good example for the other Arab states in spearheading efforts to end differences among Arab countries. Now that the world is disposing of the one-party and totalitarian rule, the paper said Jordan like other democratic nations, hopes to see a better world where peace and stability prevail and where democracy reigns supreme. The paper also referred to the King's concern with the general conditions of the public in the wake of the snowstorm and said that the leader has always led the government's efforts, over the years, towards offering services and helping meet needs of his people under such severe conditions.

While the U.S. State Department was announcing arrangements for resuming the Arab-Israeli negotiations in Washington, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was announcing that his government would call for early general elections simply to boost the peace negotiations, said Al Dastour daily. There is no doubt that the Israeli prime minister is trying to gain more time with these elections and to manoeuvre because he does not want such negotiations to achieve any success, said the paper. It goes without saying that the American administration realises too well the Israeli manoeuvre and Mr. Shamir's underhand dealings and the Arabs are expecting appropriate reactions in reply and to prevent the peace negotiations from collapsing, the paper continued. It said that all the concerned parties should pursue efforts towards convening the peace conference and making arrangements for Israel to abide by the U.N. resolutions. The paper urged the cosponsors of the peace negotiations to continue their endeavours at all levels to make their diplomacy successful and it said they can exercise diplomatic, economic, financial and other pressures on the Jewish state to achieve that goal. There is no doubt, added the paper, that for peace to be established, the world community should ensure Israel's compliance with the international legitimacy and the requirements of peace in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.



The week in print

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

JORDANIAN dailies in the past week gave prominence to the advent of the new year with commentary on the events of 1991, the Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel's manoeuvres to escape the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, the results of the first round of the Algerian parliamentary elections and a host of local issues.

Under the title: "1991 was a unique year," a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab said that the past year was not an ordinary year in history in terms of its events and the political changes in Europe. Ahmad Dhiban said that 1991 was a year of misery for the Arabs and many Third World countries and a source of jubilation for the Western countries over the collapse of communism and the break up of the Soviet Union. But, the writer predicted, the political and geographic changes would have horrible repercussions in the years to come.

According to a columnist in Al Dastour, the past year was yet one more year in which the Arabs faced more defeats and tragedies, as it witnessed the Gulf war that brought about a catastrophe to the Arab Nation. Saleh Al Qallab said that he was pessimistic about the new year as there were no signs that the Arabs could rise up again.

We do not regret the passing of 1991, which was full of tragedies for the Arabs and witnessed the fall of many innocent people and the dignity of the Arab Nation, said Mahmoud Al Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. 1991 was characterised by wars, conflict and empty promises for peace, a year that saw the collapse of a superpower through U.S.-Western influ-

ence and the liberation of Kuwait through U.S.-Western military might, said Rimawi.

Reflecting on the ongoing Middle East peace negotiations, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab made a mockery of the Arab World's position, saying that the Arabs are now at Israel's mercy. When the Arabs went to Madrid and then Washington, they were holding two trump cards: the international legitimacy and the hope of exchanging land for peace with Israel, said Saleh Al Qallab. But the Arabs instead bet on the Americans who proved impotent before the Israelis and thus were left to the mercy of the Jewish state, he said.

Tareq Massarweh was more candid in his mockery of the Arab parties' weak stand when he said that no Arab leader has the courage to say no to negotiations while the Jewish settlements, which are financed by Washington, are continuing to spring up in the occupied Arab lands.

The columnist, who writes for Al Ra'i daily, said altogether Israel has now built 144 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and has made allocations in the 1992 budget to build more of the same. The Arabs, said the writer, should adopt a concerted stand and stop the negotiations as long as Israel continues to build these settlements.

The creation of a government crisis in Israel was clearly meant as a plot to destroy the peace process, said Sawt Al Shaab daily in an editorial. Israel is planting land mines in the path of the peace process exploiting the weak American stand and a divided Arab World, said the daily.

Al Dastour daily agreed and said that the Israeli manoeuvre

was not only meant to abort the talks but also to show Israel's clear defiance of the U.S. administration.

Israel's resort to such manoeuvres, like cabinet crisis or general elections with which to abort the talks, also aim to give the Israeli leaders the initiative under any future circumstances and in the face of world pressure, said the daily.

As Israel manoeuvres to gain time, the Palestinians are determined to go ahead with their infitah and end the occupation, said Taher Al Udwan. Writing in Al Dastour, Udwan said that the new year finds the Palestinians with few friends, falling under immense pressures from all sides and lacking appropriate backing for their struggle from a divided Arab World, and so they are determined to rely on themselves and to offer more sacrifices to achieve freedom.

Turning to the outcome of the general elections in Algeria, a columnist in Al Dastour expressed his view that the success achieved by the Islamists resulted from the people's desire for any popular movement which can help it dispose of the bureaucracy and inefficiency of the single party rule.

Munes Al Razzaq said that by resorting to the Islamists the Algerians have merely showed their dissatisfaction with the ruling party which led the country to chaos.

His colleague in Al Dastour, Saleh Al Qallab, commented also on the Algerian elections by saying that democracy in that country could collapse if the ruling party decided to use violence and force to stifle the Islamic Salvation Front and abort the results of the elections.

He also warned that the Islamic Salvation Front might feel free to take all powers in its own hands and rush to impose

hegemony on all factions and institutions, a practice that could lead the country to disaster.

Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dastour, likened the elections in Algeria in 1991 to the Jordanian parliamentary elections of 1989, with a low turnout and the majority of people showing indifference to the results. The writer said that the past three decades proved the ruling party's inefficiency thus opening the way for any group to advance and take over.

Taher Al Udwan offered a piece of advice to the Islamic Salvation Front, which won most of the votes, by saying that the front should prove that there can be no return from the democratic process. At the same time, the columnist said that Islamists should prove that they have no intention of monopolising power in Algeria.

Sawt Al Shaab daily praised the government for recognising the commonwealth of states born after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The paper said that the Arabs are in need of friends in their long and bitter struggle with Israel to regain Arab rights, and the recognition was a step in the right direction as Russia and its partners are needed to help re-establish peace based on justice.

Fahd Al Fanek, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, agreed with this view and criticised the Arab papers mourning the collapse of the Soviet Union, the old superpower. The writer said that the states of the commonwealth which formed the union have themselves decided to end it and there was no need for the Arabs to lament the union's fall; but there was urgent need for the Arabs to recognise the new independent states which could help the Arab Nation achieve their goals.

Perhaps Israel could be the main winner from the collapse of the Soviet Union, as it is making arrangements for absorbing 1.2 million Jews in the former Soviet Union, of whom 200,000 live in the Islamic republics, according to Tawfiq Al Basha in Sawt Al Shaab daily.

The writer said that while the Arabs are mourning the loss of a friend, the Israelis are racing against time to consolidate their occupation by befriending the new independent republics and absorbing more Jewish immigrants to serve the cause of world Zionism.

In view of the fast moving developments in the European continent and the current moves by Europe for unity, one realises that only through economic blocs and integration can the nations of the world survive the coming stage, said Mahmoud Al Rimawi.

The writer called on the Arabs in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine to unify their stand not only in the face of Israel but also to form a bloc that can withstand and deal with the coming challenge.

His colleague in Sawt Al Shaab expressed similar views when he said that the Arab countries, particularly those involved in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, have no alternative to concerting their stand and embarking on very fruitful cooperation.

Saleh Al Qallab said that Jordan has been spearheading inter-Arab efforts towards solidarity and this solidarity is particularly needed in the coming Washington and Moscow negotiations.

In the absence of unity, the Arab countries can at least form an Arab commonwealth that could start with a few states, according to Taher Al Udwan. He said Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Algeria and Iraq together with the FLO can

forge such commonwealth as a first step, keeping the door open to other Arab states to join in. Unless such step is taken now, warned the writer, the Arab Nation will sooner or later find itself lagging behind other nations and an easy prey to others.

Ahmad Al Dabbas, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, gave prominence to the issue of foreign labour employment in the kingdom and praised the government's measures to give preference to Jordanians in employment.

Noting the labour minister's figures of 162,000 Egyptians working in Jordan, of whom only 10,000 hold valid work permits, the writer said that appropriate and drastic action should be taken by the government to help Jordanian job-seekers find employment.

Jordan, the writer said, has found the doors of employment in Egypt and other Arab countries closed and it is only fair to treat others in the same way.

Columnist Ahmad Dhiban said that the government should give due attention to the plight of Jordanian farmers, rescheduling their debts and helping them overcome the present difficulties.

The government has spent millions to back faltering share holding companies, of which 10 declared their bankruptcy in 1991 alone, but only with very little backing it can help the farmers and ensure better agricultural production, said the writer. Only a handful of persons benefited from the government assistance to the share-holding companies, said the writer, while thousands of farmers can benefit from a proper action costing the treasury much less and guaranteeing a great deal more for the nation.

هكذا من الأمل

PLO seen seeking U.S. pressure

(Continued from page 1)

start on Jan. 7 in Washington. The U.S. however, has not committed itself to a date which will in effect give the Palestinians little room for manoeuvre.

The Palestinian team was scheduled to arrive in Amman on Thursday on its way to attend the second round of bilateral talks.

Initially the team was delayed by a strong blizzard that has swept the area, but later the delegation admitted that it was postponing its trip to protest against the Israeli decision to expel 12 Palestinians.

Palestinian officials, however, said that the delay was a form of protest against Israeli repression as well as an expression of resentment of the U.S. apathy or unwillingness to pressure Israel "to respect the peace talks."

The officials told the Jordan Times that so far the decision was to delay the talks to prompt the U.S. to take a decision to interfere and bring Israel back in line, but that there was also a growing trend inside the movement in favour of a total boycott.

During the first round of the bilateral talks held in Washington last month, Palestinians were disappointed at what they perceived as a mild American reaction to Israeli success in delaying the talks and later in refusing the dual-track approach to negotiations.

The Israeli refusal to accept the two-track approach, involving Israeli-Arab negotiations and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, resulted in an impasse that kept the negotiators in the corridors discussing a compromise.

There were conflicting Palestinian statements over whether a compromise was reached or not, but PLO sources in Tunis said Friday the leadership had not seen an acceptable solution yet.

PLO officials said that the Israeli refusal to negotiate with the Palestinian side of the joint team remained the major obstacle to the resumption of the talks. "This is a major point of substance. It is not a matter of procedure," the officials said.

It is not a matter of procedure, the officials said. "We are ready to address the Palestinian national rights or not," said one Palestinian official.

Officials said that the Israeli policy on the ground since the beginning of the Madrid peace conference last October had proved that Israel is not interested in a peace settlement.

"Our main concern was to force Israel to stop building settlements in the occupied territories. Now we have to make sure that Israel stops its repressive campaign. Otherwise the peace talks will be meaningless," said a senior PLO official on Friday.

Palestinians were hoping that Israel would stop the building of settlements simultaneously as the talks start. Instead Israel launched a new crackdown on the Palestinians inside the occupied territories and refused to budge on the settlements issue.

Palestinians are most disappointed with the apparent U.S. unwillingness to assert the issue of the settlements as a major item in the talks' agenda after it rejected Palestinian demands that the cessation of the settlements be a prerequisite for peace talks.

"The delay is a test of the American seriousness. If Washington maintains its apathy that means Israel will continue to feel free to pursue its arbitrary policies and intransigence," said a Palestinian official in Amman.

The PLO had considered boycotting the first round of the bilateral talks when the U.S. refused to grant entry visa to PLO advisors. But it had to reconsider its position under immense Arab and international pressure and for fear of being blamed of sabotaging the talks.

Consequently, judging from comments by PLO officials, the organisation's final decision will hinge on two factors:

— The popular Palestinian position, especially in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, towards the peace talks.

— The level of coordination and cooperation shown by the other Arab sides involved in the negotiations.

Although the PLO leadership in Tunis will take the final decision, Palestinian officials said that the organisation will follow the mood and the lead of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

"Our major concern is to maintain popular support for the Palestinian negotiating team. If it loses popular backing it will be of no use to anybody, including the U.S.," said the senior PLO official.

Others in the PLO differ with this line arguing that the Palestinians should go and continue its battle in Washington.

"This view appears so far to coincide with the political position of the other parties involved. So far Jordan, the Palestinians' partner in the joint team, has declared that its delegation was leaving according to schedule."

Senior PLO official Farok Kaddoumi arrived in Damascus Friday in an attempt to increase Palestinian-Syrian coordination and to secure Syrian backing for the Palestinian stand.

"We have not asked the Syrians and the Lebanese to boycott the talks, but only to support the delay of the talks," a senior PLO official told the Jordan Times Friday evening.

Scrolls divide scholars over question of faith

By Oliver Gillie

FRAGMENT of ancient vellum found in a cave by the Dead Sea about 40 years ago is causing bitter controversy about the origins of Christian belief. The Hebrew words on it are said to refer to the execution of a Messiah and support the idea that early Christian tenets sprang from a Jewish movement with similar beliefs.

Robert Eisenman, professor of Middle East Religions at California State University in Long Beach, and other American scholars believe the words show that the Jewish writers of the scroll, who lived between about 150 BC and AD 70, were familiar with the idea of a Messiah who would suffer and die. But Biblical scholars meeting in Oxford last week to study the fragment dispute this interpretation.

Until recent weeks, scholarly dispute about the meaning of unpublished portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls was not possible because access to them was highly restricted. Previously, a small group of trusted scholars inherited a monopoly on the scrolls from the intellectual descendants of the Dominican archaeologist Father Roland de Vaux and his original team of six "inter-confessional" Christian scholars.

The monopoly of access to the full scrolls and all the fragments was broken in September when the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California, decided to supply microfilm of them to all bona fide scholars on demand.

This move, after a long campaign by Professor Eisenman, finally forced the Israel Antiquities Authority, which had inherited the monopoly initiated by de Vaux,

to release photographs of the scrolls.

The disputed fragment of vellum, which is 5cms wide by 4cms in depth, contains five lines of text and part of a sixth line. Known in the catalogue of the scrolls as 4Q Serekh Milhamah, the fragment — one of many thousands — appears in a photograph with several other pieces.

The translation of the first three lines of the fragment are not disputed and read as follows:

Line 1: "Isaiah the Prophet";

Line 2: "a shoot risen from the branch of Jesse";

Line 3: "branch of David and they... will... be judged".

Scholars agree that the second line is a quotation from Isaiah (Chapter II, verse 1) and refers to a Messiah who is expected to defeat the empire of Assyria and Babylon.

The next line emphasises this by use of the term "branch of David" which is another name for the Hebrew Messiah. The dispute centres on the fourth line which is translated by Dr. Eisenman as meaning "and they killed (or executed) the Prince of the Congregation, branch of David."

The Prince of the Congregation, it is agreed, is the Messiah. But in the Jewish tradition the Messiah is not killed and so this line appears to suggest a Messiah from the Christian tradition. This is reinforced by the fifth line which reads: "woundings (or piercings) and a priest commanded", suggesting events akin to those of the crucifixion.

The word "piercings", which is very rare, provides further clues to the significance of the passage, according to Michael Wise, a Hebrew scholar from the University of Chicago who supports

Professor Eisenman's interpretation.

"The Hebrew word for piercings only occurs in one other place in the Bible, in Isaiah 53, verse 5, a text which is of crucial significance in Christian theology. For Christians, but not for Jews, this passage of Isaiah is understood to be describing the Messiah, Jesus." Verses 5 and 6 from Isaiah 53 refer to a Messiah who suffered for the sins of the world:

"The detective work among the scrolls, delayed for 40 years by the monopoly of some scholars, has only just begun. Once the jigsaw puzzle of fragments has been fully assembled, the understanding of the scrolls should accelerate."

The two American scholars believe their interpretation is supported by further evidence of a Christian type of Messiah in other Dead Sea texts. One of these, called 11Q Melchizedek, refers to a prophetic figure who proclaims from Holy writ. The Hebrew word for proclaimer, Mebasser, used in this Dead Sea text is also used in the Gospel of St. Luke to describe Jesus when he reads

from scripture in the synagogue.

"The proclaimer has a heavenly mission and can be seen as a kind of Messiah," Professor Wise said. "Furthermore it appears that the proclaimer referred to in 11Q Melchizedek is put to death, additional evidence for an early Jewish tradition of a dying Messiah of the Christian type."

But the argument is not straightforward and depends upon tracing texts. 11Q Melchizedek does not refer directly to a dying Messiah but quotes from the Book of Daniel (Chapter 9, verse 25). This refers to a Messiah, a Prince, who will be "cut off."

"The suffering and dying Messiah in this Jewish tradition is not identical with the Christian concept because Christ said he suffered and died for all men," Professor Wise said. "However Isaiah 53 does refer to a Servant of the Lord, an idea which is very important for Christians. Our interpretation of the fragment suggests that some Jews prior to Christianity saw the Messiah in a similar way to Christians later on."

The interrelation of the two American scholars is disputed by Geza Vermes, professor emeritus of Jewish Studies at Oxford University, who has studied the fragment in Oxford where photographs of all the scrolls are held. Professor Vermes believes that the fourth line of the fragment should read "the Prince of the Congregation killed him" and not

"they killed the Prince."

All the scholars agree that the words are ambiguous, but have special reasons for their own interpretation. Technically the translation depends on whether the particle of the accusative, which indicates whether the Prince is the subject or object of the sentence, is used or not. In this case the particle was not used, suggesting Professor Vermes's rendering of the phrase. But the particle was not invariably used in the Hebrew of this period, so that argument is not final.

Dr. Vermes, together with Dr. Timothy Lim, a Canadian Hebrew scholar presently at Oxford, argue on more general grounds that the fragment does not refer to a Christ-like Messiah. Tracing other references to the Prince of the Congregation, they find that this phrase is just another term for the Jewish Messiah.

"Elsewhere in the scrolls the Prince of the Congregation is the glorious war leader of the sons of light who are fighting the forces of darkness," Professor Vermes said. "It is clear from these other references that it is the Prince who does the killing. There is no necessity to translate the text as meaning the Messiah is killed. How the concept of a suffering and dying Messiah penetrated the New Testament remains as mysterious as ever."


If Professor Vermes is correct

one question remains: who is put to death by the Prince of the Congregation? William Horbury, a Hebrew scholar from Cambridge, suggests the answer may be found in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, written in ancient Syrian and part of the Hebrew apocrypha.

In Chapter 40 of the Syriac Apocalypse the final victory of the Messiah, the anointed one, is described: "The last ruler who is left alive at that time will be bound... and they will carry him on Mount Zion, and my anointed one will convict him of all his deeds... And after these things he will kill him... And this (the last ruler's) dominion will last forever until the world of corruption has ended."

The detective work among the scrolls, delayed for 40 years by the monopoly of some scholars, has only just begun. Once the jigsaw puzzle of fragments has been fully assembled, the understanding of the scrolls should accelerate.

"We are at an infant stage of understanding these texts," Professor Wise said. "We can't rule out other interpretations of the fragment. But we thought that people should know that it is there. For years scholars who had a monopoly of the scrolls told us that there was nothing of interest to the origins of Christian belief. We believe they are wrong." — The Independent



Shahnaz

HERBAL

A Crusade for Natural Aids

A comprehensive Shahnaz product booklet is yours for the asking — it is your passport to the latest natural developments in beauty science, that treats acne, impurities, dark circles around the eyes and much, much more...

Tally Trading Establishment
P.O. Box 910823
Amman - Jordan

For your free copy just phone 712704 or call personally at:

- * Dajani International Pharmacy, Shmeisani
- * Habayeb Pharmacy, 4th Circle
- * Bushnaq Pharmacy, Jabal Elhelbeh
- * Eidakhlelah Circle Pharmacy, Jabal Al Hussein
- * Yassin Salon, Marriott Hotel

James Dean
25/11/1955

JEANS WEAR

1 Akkad Centre, Gardens Street Tel. 695841 Amman

Jordan condemns Israeli move

(Continued from page 1)

peace process.

Four are members of the mainstream Fatah faction, which supports the talks, and two belong to Hamas, a Muslim fundamentalist movement opposed to the talks.

All have served prison terms for anti-Israeli activity and most are married with children.

The military statement said their organisations were responsible for hundreds of attacks against Israelis as well as Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israeli authorities.

It said the front's main attacks included the killing of a Jewish settler stabbed in Jerusalem in February, the attempted murder of an Israeli visiting a West Bank refugee camp, six shooting incidents and six grenade incidents.

It said 55 Hamas cells were uncovered in 1991 and admitted to 67 attacks, including stabbings and running down Israelis with vehicles.

Captured Fatah activists have admitted to 720 attacks in recent years, including 53 shootings, 45 bombings, 118 firebombings and 426 assaults and stabbings, it said.

In the past year, Israel has stepped up construction of housing for Jews in the occupied territories, and on Thursday, parliament approved a 1992 national budget earmarking money for 5,000 more housing units.

The U.S. ambassador to Israel deplored the Israeli decision to expel Palestinians.

"I conveyed an immediate

reaction to the news on the late evening," outgoing U.S. Ambassador William Brown told reporters at a news conference in Tel Aviv.

The United States "deplored" the expulsion of Palestinians as well as attacks on Israelis, he added.

Asked about the extra funds for settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, which the United States says are an obstacle to peace, he said: "Such activities and such reported funding or intent to fund certainly do not go unnoticed."

The Israeli parliament passed the delayed 1992 budget by 60 votes to 53 on Thursday after last-minute haggling in which Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir offered extra money to tiny parties supported by rabbis and right-wing settlers.

Israeli officials have tried to play down the impact of the budget concessions on Washington, where Congress is soon to discuss Israel's request for guarantees for badly needed loans.

But in considering the \$10 billion loan guarantees, the United States is sure to weigh the progress of Middle East peace talks and whether Israel is moving forward with economic reforms.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said the Middle East peace talks could be in jeopardy unless the United States and United Nations force Israel to rescind its decision.

Ahmad Abdul Rahman, in a statement issued at the PLO headquarters in Tunis, called on Washington and the U.N. Security Council to overturn "this shameful action."

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

THE PROFESSIONALS ALWAYS CHOOSE THE RELIABLE

PACKING, AIR FREIGHT, FORWARDING, DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICES AND DELIVERIES, CUSTOMS CLEARANCE, TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS.

AMIN KAWAR & SONS
TEL 604676 604696
P.O. Box 7808 AMMAN

CROWN INT'L EST.
Packing, shipping, forwarding, storage, clearing, door-to-door service

Alr. Sea and Land

Agents all over the world
Tel: 664090
Fax: 690652
P.O. Box 82647 Amman

4 Rent & Sale
Many villas and apartments are available for rent and sale - furnished or unfurnished.

Also many lots of land are available for sale.

For further details, please call

Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 810605, 810609
Fax: 810520

RENT Distinctive
Villas Apartments Flats in ROYAL WEST AMMAN

real estate "R" US

Just call NIOAL
693037

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO RENT IN WEST AMMAN

CALL SOHA AT

Saudi Real Estate
687821/22

For the best for your MONEY, ADVERTISE in the **Jordan Times**

RESTAURANT CHINA

The first & best Chinese Restaurant in Jordan

1st Circle, Jabal Amman, near Alhijrah Girls School

Take-away service
Open daily 12:00-3:30 p.m.
7:00 - Midnight
Tel. 639068

CHEN'S CHINESE RESTAURANT
Mecca Street, Yarmouk Engineers' Housing Estate, near Kilo Supermarket

Mongolian Barbeque for Lunch Friday only
Tel: 818214

Come and taste our specialties
Open daily 12:00 - 3:30 p.m.
6:30 - Midnight

PEKING RESTAURANT

AUTHENTIC CHINESE CUISINE

elegant, colorful atmosphere moderate prices

Shmeisani, tel 601790
now open daily

MANDARIN RESTAURANT

Special Chinese Foods
Skilled Chinese Chefs

Open 11:30-3:30 & 6:00-11:30 daily

Take away is available

Wadi Saqra Road near Philadelphia Hotel
Tel. 661922, Amman

Chef Tested Always Loved

CHINA RESTAURANT

AQABA

CHINESE FOOD

Open daily
12:00 - 15:00 & 18:30 - 23:30
Tel: 03 - 314415

Bonita Restaurant & Tapes

International Cuisine
Spanish Specialities

Open Lunch & Dinner

For Reservation, Jabel Amman Third Circle Tel. 615090 - 615091

STUDIO HAIG

Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service
Develop your colour film at our shop and get:-

- JUMBO photo size 30% larger
- Free Metal Frame 13 x 18 cm

Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays Bank. Phone: 604042
Swedish tel: 823891

LOBBY LOUNGE

AL SABIL

DAILY PIANO ENTERTAINMENT

The First Class Hotel in Amman that has a Kitchenette in every room...

DAROTEL
داروتيل

Amman - Tel 668193
P.O. Box 9403 - Fax 602434
Tele. 23888 DAROTEL JO

Ideal Residence For Expatriates and Businessmen

Live Music

French Cuisine
Cocktail Bar

819564 - Abdoun

Sweiss

SILVER & CHOCOLATES

Open from 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

ABDOUN CIRCLE
TEL. 823000

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1992, 7

Church in Britain flexes financial muscle in Sunday trading row

LONDON (R) — The Church of England is flexing its financial muscle in an attempt to stop big stores in Britain from trading on Sundays.

The head of the church commissioners, Sir Douglas Lovelock, said he had written to major supermarket and retail chains in which the church is a substantial shareholder deploring Sunday trading.

The church commissioners administer the Church of England's investment portfolio, estimated to amount to £2.5 billion (\$4.7 billion) in shares and property.

"We're a very large shareholder in some of these companies (and) you have a right and a duty to try to influence those who at the end of the day decide what the company will do," Sir Lovelock told British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio.

Several big supermarkets and department stores in Britain began trading on Sundays during the last season of Christmas. The government says it is powerless to stop them because of uncertainty over the legitimacy of a traditional British ban.

The BBC said Sir Lovelock had written to companies in which the Church of England holds shares worth £24 million (\$45 million), including supermarket giants Tesco and the owners of Sainsbury and Woolworths.

The letters contained no explicit threat to divest but Sir Lovelock planned to write to companies which continued to flout the ban "in even stronger terms," the BBC said.

Sunday trading has sparked a passionate debate between supporters of liberalisation and traditionalists who believe it threatens church attendances and Christian values.

Critics of the ban say the law is a nonsense because while Britons can buy beer on a Sunday they cannot buy Bibles.

Bad debts at big Japanese banks estimated at \$155b

TOKYO (R) — Non-performing loans at Japan's major commercial banks exceeded general loan loss reserves at the end of September and the number of bad loans is likely to rise, the chairman of the Federation of Bankers' Associations of Japan has said.

Kenichi Suematsu told reporters that loans with interest payments in arrears for more than six months at Japan's 11 big commercial banks exceeded the 830 billion yen (\$6.43 billion) the banks held in general loan loss reserves at the end of September.

Japanese banks are required to set general reserves, which are tax-deductible, at 0.3 per cent of

outstanding loans. Mr. Suematsu, president of Mitsui Taiyo Kobe Bank, said banks calculated the value of non-performing loans by subtracting the principal value of loans more than six months in arrears from the value of collateral taken to secure the loans.

The number of non-performing loans was likely to rise further by the end of the year to March 31, 1992, he said.

Mr. Suematsu said the federation has asked the government to keep the required level for general reserves at 0.3 per cent.

He said concern was growing among banks that the government would lower the

general reserve to loans ratio in order to boost tax revenue in the next fiscal year.

"We want the government to keep general reserves at least 0.3 per cent... as corporate bankruptcies are rising," he said.

Mr. Suematsu also said the federation would soon start studying ways to improve bank disclosures of risky loans.

Worries about the health of banks are growing after the adventurous lending policies of the 1980s left them saddled with souring property-related loans. Some economists have said would had debt at Japan's commercial banks could exceed 20 trillion (\$155 billion).

Virus of price increases spreads across the new Commonwealth of Independent States

MOSCOW (AP) — Pressured by Russia's mammoth price increases, other members of the new Commonwealth of Independent States said Friday they will follow suit, sending an inflationary shudder across the former Soviet Union.

Belarus raised its prices an average of 300 per cent Friday to keep Russians from surging across its borders in search of cheaper goods.

Ukraine and Moldova took similar steps Thursday, when Russia freed prices in state stores. Kazakhstan said it will boost prices starting Monday. And the central Asian republics — Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan — said they might do the same next week.

The price increases could start a trade battle that would endanger the fragile commonwealth.

In a worst-case scenario, the republics could try to one-up each other, raising prices and wages higher and higher in a destructive inflationary spiral.

Already, Ukraine has doubled its minimum wage to 370 roubles a month, exceeding Russia's new minimum of 342 roubles.

On Jan. 10, Ukraine also will introduce coupons to protect its food supplies. Ukrainians will receive 25 per cent of their wages in the coupons, which look like banknotes and will be necessary to purchase food and clothing.

Russia, by far the largest and most powerful member of the new commonwealth, set off the price increases by freeing prices Thursday in an effort to boost production.

Supporters of President Boris Yeltsin's risky move say the drastic measure will give factories and farmers an incentive to boost production.

Critics, however, contend it is pointless to free prices when basic industries remain government-owned monopolies and agriculture is still dominated by inefficient collective farms.

While state stores remained as understocked as ever, the price of bread roughly tripled, medicine quadrupled, and gasoline rose five times across Russia. Price regulations will remain on some basic goods, including bread, sugar, cooking oil, baby food and vodka.

Managers of state stores now are free to negotiate with their suppliers to pay whatever is necessary to obtain other goods.

But the stores are then restricted to a maximum retail markup of 2 per cent, the Izvestia newspaper reported.

In an interview with the weekly Moscow News, Mr. Yeltsin adviser Konstantin Kagalovsky predicted that higher prices would fill the stores with goods in about one week. Then, he said, competition will cause prices to subside.

But in a side-by-side article, a research institute headed by economist Grigory Yavlinsky said food would remain in short supply and that the rate of inflation would vastly exceed the Russian government's predictions.

Mr. Yavlinsky has advised Mr. Yeltsin and former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev. His institute, named Epicenter, predicted that within three weeks Russians will take to the streets in "organised protests... with economic demands."

No economic unrest was reported Thursday or Friday.

Vasily Grosu, press secretary to Moldovan President Mircea Snegur, said citizens of the tiny republic bordering Romania reacted "very calmly" to price increases averaging 300 per cent.

He said the public understood that "this measure was taken... to protect Moldova from Russian invading the republic because of price hikes in Russia."

Shoppers and store managers interviewed Thursday in Moscow and other Russian cities were skeptical that more food, clothing or electronics would soon flow into the shops.

"We don't have any secret basement full of food that we're holding back, if that's what people think," said Irina Karieva, administrator of Moscow's cavernous and gloomy Taganka supermarket. "Everything depends on the producers, not on us."

Many shoppers were angry. "This is terrible. This is killing us. The prices are unreal," said a man surveying fatty bologna at Moscow's Smolensky food store. Its price had tripled to 58 rouble a kilogramme.

Tatyana Avdoshina, 21, mad the rounds of supermarkets in Moscow Thursday and noted the prices on identical items varied enormously.

A bottle of generic Soviet champagne, for example, was for 120 roubles at one market, 144 at a second, and 156 at a third.

Report says U.S. families pay 12% of income for health care

WASHINGTON (AP) — The average American family pays out nearly 12 per cent of its income for health care, and the figure is expected to rise to more than 16 per cent by the year 2000, according to a study.

In 1980, the average was nine per cent, said the study by the Families USA, or Families United for Senior Action, Foundation. The group said it is concerned with health and long term care issues.

"Health costs threaten the economic security of most American families," said Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA.

The study said families in North Dakota are paying out the largest portion of total family income for health care at 14.1 per cent.

The report said about one third of the spending was for out-of-pocket costs such as payments to doctors, insurance deductibles and prescription drugs. One sixth goes to insurance companies in premiums, one-eighth for medical care and the rest for taxes to support state and federal health programmes.

The report said health care spending in the United States now comes to \$6,535 per family, of which \$4,296, or approximately two-thirds, is paid by the families themselves. The remaining one-third, or \$2,239, is paid by business.

In 1980, it said, the average American family paid \$1,742 for health care, including out-of-pocket expenses, health insurance and state and federal taxes that go for health programmes. By the end of the century, the average will be \$9,397, an increase of 439 per cent in 20 years, the report said.

Report finds Indian banking system as over-regulated and over-administered

NEW DELHI (R) — Restrictions on private and foreign banks in India should be lifted, capital markets substantially liberalised and the state-dominated financial sector restructured, an official report has said.

A nine-member government committee on financial reforms proposed that a ban on setting up new private or foreign banks be lifted and licensing of bank branches be abolished.

It said private sector banks should be put on an equal footing with those in the public sector and that there should be no further nationalisation of banks.

"The deterioration in the financial health of the system has reached a point where unless remedial measures are taken soon, it could... have an adverse effect on depositor and investor confidence," the long-awaited report said.

All major banks in India were nationalised in 1969 and 20 state banks now control 90 per cent of all banking assets.

State banks have funded the creation of a solid industrial base and freed millions of villagers from moneylenders.

But political intervention has

saddled them with bad debt, inefficiency, excess staff and a crushing heap of directives, the report said.

It was sharply critical of the politicisation of an over-regulated state banking system and said bank executives and board directors should no longer be political appointees.

"The committee believed that the Indian banking system, at present, is over-regulated and over-administered," it said.

India's banks are among the least profitable in the world despite deposit growth averaging 18 per cent a year, mostly because of bad loans and an obligation to provide cheap "directed credit" to deprived groups, the World Bank said in a confidential report.

The committee proposed the government set up an assets reconstruction fund, which would "take over a portion of the bad or doubtful debts at a discount. The World Bank has indicated it could provide financing for such a fund."

The committee report said that central bank policy on allowing foreign banks to open new offices, branches or subsidiaries should be liberalised.

Joint ventures between foreign banks and Indian banks could also be permitted, particularly in regard to merchant and investment banking and other newer forms of financial services," it said.

Foreign banks should be subjected to the same requirements applicable to domestic banks, the report said.

"If foreign banks are unable

to fulfill certain requirements, such as directed credit, the Reserve Bank should work out alternative methods with a view to ensuring a level playing field," it said.

The report said the requirement of directed credit should be slashed to 10 per cent of a bank's total assets from a current 40 per cent and be phased out completely in three years.

It said the Reserve Bank should progressively lower the cash reserve ratio — now at 38 per cent of assets — and interest rates should be deregulated to reflect market conditions.

"The committee is of the view that the present structure of administered interest rates is highly complex and rigid," it pointed out.

The report said concessional interest rates should be phased out. "It would be desirable to provide for what may be called a prime rate, which would be the floor of the new lending rates."

"Balance sheets of banks and financial institutions should be made more transparent and full disclosures made in the balance sheets as recommended by the international accounting standards committee," it said.

Computerised bank operations are urgently needed to improve customer services, it said.

The report recommended that the state banking system be reorganised to create three or four large banks "which would become international in character." Another eight to 10 banks with a nationwide branch network would provide universal banking services, it said.

Foreign investments rise fivefold in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — Foreign investment in Sri Lanka increased more than fivefold last year compared with 1990, a government official has said.

Lakshman Watawala, chairman of the Greater Colombo Economic Commission (GCEC), which oversees foreign investment throughout the country, told reporters that 230 projects worth \$356 million were approved in 1991.

Approval was given for 114 projects worth \$65.6 million in 1990.

"Most investors are finding Sri Lanka more attractive than countries in the region like Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia," Mr. Watawala said.

In 1989, when the government was fighting a bitter uprising by leftwing rebels, investment plunged to \$40 million in just 23 projects. It is still battling Tamil separatists in the north and east.

The biggest investor last year was South Korea, followed by Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan. The money went into infrastructure projects and factories making textiles, soft toys and electronic goods.

At present there are 144 factories employing 84,500 people in three free-trade zones. Mr. Watawala said 200 districts had been designated where industry would get the same tax holidays and duty-free allowances for raw materials and plant as firms in the free-trade zones.

He said concessions would also be granted for the agricultural sector, infrastructure such as housing and hospitals, telecommunications, recreational facilities like golf courses, transport and hotels.

Foreign investment in Vietnam grows sharply

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Vietnam and foreign companies signed agreements for 114 joint investment projects worth a total of \$1.27 billion in the first 10 months of 1991, the state media has reported.

That compared with 37 projects capitalised at \$360 million in 1988, the first year of Vietnam's liberal foreign investment law.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.8595/8605	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1491/96	Canadian dollar
	1.5373/83	Deutschemarks
	1.7320/30	Dutch guilders
	1.3675/85	Swiss francs
	31.57/61	Belgian francs
	5.2450/2500	French francs
	1159/1160	Italian lire
	124.75/85	Japanese yen
	5.6000/50	Swedish crowns
	6.0425/75	Norwegian crowns
	5.9725/75	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	352.75/353.25	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Share prices closed sharply higher in futures-driven trade but again in very thin volumes. The All Ordinaries index gained 12 points to 1,659.9.

BOMBAY — Share prices rose broadly in new account trade. The BSE index closed at 1,996.50, up 27.34 points.

FRANKFURT — Early enthusiasm turned to caution. The DAX index ended at 1,603.62, up 1.74 points on the day.

ZURICH — The SPI index rose 15.7 points to 1,068.5, the day's high.

PARIS — Another Wall Street rally helped the CAC-40 gain 20.39 points to 1,770.3.

LONDON — The FTSE index seceded up 11.3 points to 2,504.1, a seven-week closing high.

NEW YORK — U.S. stocks were firm in spite of what analysts say is an overbought state. At 1753 GMT the Dow Jones industrials were at 3,184.48, up 12.07.

Greek tourism office joins in privatisation spirit

ATHENS (R) — Greece's state tourism office is getting into the spirit of the government's privatisation plan and will soon put hotels and beach-front camping sites on offer.

Thirty-three hotels and 11 camping sites have been selected to launch the tourism office's version of privatisation, being pushed by the conservative government. Nicholas Yatrakos, head of the National Tourism organisation (EOT), has said.

The hotels will be offered on 25-year leases and the campaign sites rented on different terms, he told a business conference.

EOT owns hundreds of properties around the country, ranging from hotels, bars and camping sites to casinos.

"I'm the manager of a huge amount of property worth hundreds of millions of dollars," Mr. Yatrakos said. "Our policy is to stop managing tourism and come ourselves to promoting tourism."

THE SPANISH CULTURAL CENTRE

Announces the start of the winter Spanish language course for three months. Registration starts for the courses as of Saturday, Dec. 21, 1991. Course begins Jan. 4, 1992. Spanish language courses for all levels — at three periods a week for each level. Courses on Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, one hour a day. For more information call the Spanish Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman- Third Circle, Mohammad Hafez Maaz Street. Tel.: 624049-610858

M/S. SRI GURDEV CO., LTD.

Manufacturer Representative Exporter & Commission Agent
Address: G.P.O. Box 1573, 281/4 Sol Paupanich, Rajawongse Rd, Sampheng, Bangkok 10100, Thailand.
Tel: 2245335, 2247555, Fax: 2246704, Telex: 21640 GURDEV TH.
Dealing: Textile place goods of all kind. Ready made garment. Auto Spare Parts in Japanese cars. Cosmetics.
All enquiries are welcome. We assure our full services.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ELECTING THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

УВАЖАЕМИ СЪНАРОДНИЦИ,
На 12.1.1992г. в България ще се проведат избори за президент и вицепрезидент. Съгласно новия изборителен закон, всеки български гражданин, независимо от това, къде се намира в момента, може да упражни правото си на глас.

Ако желаете да направите това, Посолството на Република България в Аман ВИ КАНИ НАЙ-УЧТИВО да се запишете в избирателните списъци, като съобщите трите имена, дата и място на ождане и номера на задграничния паспорт. Това може да направите всеки ден от 09.00 до 12.00 часа между 4 и 11.1.92г в сградата на Посолството, или на телефон / 818151/ 52 факс/818 153/или телекс / 24 246 /. Законът предвижда възможност да се гласува и без предварително записване, като явите се на самия ден на изборите гласуват същ, по отделен списък.

Избирателната секция се открива в сградата на Посолството в Аман на 12.1.92г. и ще работи от 08.00до18.00ч.
ПОСОЛСТВОТО НА РЕПУБЛИКА БЪЛГАРИЯ В АМАН

Cinema Tel: 677420
CONCORD
Kamal Shinnawi, Farouq Fishawi & Najwa Fuad in
DR. MANAL DANCES
(Arabic)
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore in
GHOST
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
Special shows for children on Thursday and Friday at 11:30 a.m.
A BOOK OF HEROES

Tel: 675571
Nabli Al Mashini Theatre
On Thursday, Jan. 2 at 8 p.m.
The stars of Haret Abu Awwad family will resume their performances of
Zaman Al Shaklabeih "Sommersault Time"
Tickets available daily at the theatre's entrance.

Cinema Tel: 625155
RAINBOW
TERMINATOR "2" JUDGEMENT DAY
Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Rival sides sign ceasefire; new Yugoslavia to be formed

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — A fresh ceasefire agreement could finally end six months of brutal fighting in Croatia, but plans to proclaim a smaller, Serb-dominated Yugoslavia Friday may jeopardise a true peace.

Despite the agreement to ceasefire at 6 p.m. (1700 GMT), the two sides continued to pound each other relentlessly in anticipation of ending hostilities.

The new peace pact, signed Thursday by a senior federal army commander and the Croatian defence minister, could pave the way for deployment of up to 10,000 United Nations' peacekeepers in Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Federal air force jets bombed the city of Daruvar, 100 kilometres east of Zagreb, during the night. Daruvar has been an important staging area for a major Croat advance along that front.

Air raid warnings were in force in eight towns in northern Croatia Friday morning, defence officials said.

A heavy exchange of artillery fire started after midnight around the key eastern city of Osijek, Croatian shells slammed into the centre of the Croat-held city, where one person died and 13 were injured in a similar bombardment Thursday.

Artillery and small arms fire exchanges were reported from the central Adriatic coast Sibenik and Zadar.

U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance, who brokered Thursday's accord, called it "an important step forward."

But he was adamant that a sustained truce must be in place before the U.N. can even think of dispatching peacekeeping. Assembling such a force could take about a month, he indicated.

Mr. Vance left Belgrade early Friday for Lisbon to brief Portugal, which took over the rotating presidency of the European Community on Jan. 1, and Lord Carrington, the EC special envoy on Yugoslavia, on this week's apparent breakthrough.

From Lisbon, Mr. Vance was to go to New York for talks with new U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, who is expected to make a statement early next week on deploying peacekeeping to end Europe's bloodiest fighting since World War II.

Many obstacles to peace remain, especially in Serb-dominated areas of Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia, which is dominated by Slavic Muslims but has sizable, tense Serb and Croat minorities.

If the war spreads to Bosnia, slaughter and destruction are likely to be far worse than in the six-month war sparked by Croatia's declaration of independence last June 25.

Serb minority leaders in Bosnia and Croatia were expected to attend a meeting in Belgrade Friday of more than 100 parties and movements to proclaim a new, smaller Yugoslavia. Allies of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic dominate the group, and Serbia is likely to dominate the new alliance.

But Milosevic has left unclear exactly which territories would be incorporated into the planned new country, whose supporters expect it to inherit the legal status of the old Yugoslavia in international forums.

That would obviate the need for recognition. Serbia and its ally Montenegro are the only two of Yugoslavia's six republics that have not asked to be recognised by the EC later this month.

The Belgrade meeting is expected to declare that the internal boundaries between the republics



are subject to change. That could enable Serbia to absorb Serb-dominated parts of other republics into the new nation.

The territorial issue is central. Serbia, the largest republic, maintains that Serbs in Croatia and other republics must be allowed to live together in one state. That is rejected by the dominant ethnic groups in Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia.

The war pits Croatian defenders against Serb irregulars opposed to Croatian independence and the Serb-dominated federal army.

Serb-dominated forces have captured more than a third of Croatian territory, but Croatian forces have made some battlefield gains in recent weeks.

Croatia's centre-right government has vowed to win back that territory, either through negotiations or fighting.

Mr. Vance said Thursday he was more optimistic than before

about peace because the latest agreement binds both sides not to fire back if fired upon, but to talk to each other if the truce is broken.

Agreement on monitoring and liaison to observe the truce are "absolutely essential if we are to make sure that this is different" from previous truces, Mr. Vance told reporters.

Vuk Draskovic, leader of the main Serbian opposition party, the Serbian Renewal Movement, was quoted in the media as saying the plan for a new Yugoslavia "dangerously threatens" the truce agreement and thus the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers.

Peacekeepers are supposed to ensure demilitarisation of all combat zones, including the large Serb-held Krajina region in western Croatia and smaller Serb enclaves in central and eastern Croatia, and to allow some 700,000 refugees to return home.

Bush in Singapore on 2nd stop of Far East tour

SINGAPORE (AP) — President George Bush arrived Friday seeking a larger military presence in this small city-state to fill the gap that will be created by the pullout of American forces from the Philippines.

On the second leg of his four-nation trip to the Asia-Pacific region, Mr. Bush also was to announce the lifting of the U.S. trade embargo against Cambodia.

He arrived from Melbourne after assuring Australian business leaders that the United States would not abandon its "special responsibility" for stability in the region.

The United States is looking toward Singapore as a possible military stronghold because of the forced U.S. pullout from Subic Bay Naval Station and its abandonment of volcano-crippled Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

The Bush administration wants to shift some security resources — but not build a new base — in this island republic near the equator, U.S. officials said.

That would likely include the U.S. command structures currently based at Subic Bay, as well as expanded rights to use Singapore bases and make port calls, said one official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A November 1990 agreement signed by Vice President Dan Quayle and then-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew already provides U.S. warships and planes wider use of existing bases. Mr. Bush hopes to expand on that arrangement.

An official travelling with Mr. Bush said the president would lift the embargo against Cambodia, where warring factions signed a peace treaty two months ago.

The embargo dates to April 1975, when Khmer Rouge rebels forced the pro-Western government from power.

It will be lifted in recognition of that nation's progress toward democratic rule, U.S. officials said Thursday.

The move is part of the process of reconciliation between the United States and Cambodia following the signing of the peace treaty in Paris on Oct. 23.

The United States has linked normal trade and diplomatic ties with Cambodia to a successful start of the Cambodian peace process, which is scheduled to culminate in free elections in 1993.

Mr. Bush, after spending the first three days of his 12-day trip in Australia, becomes the first U.S. president to visit Singapore, a republic of 3 million people, 76 per cent of whom are ethnic Chinese. There are Malay and Indian minorities.

Mr. Bush will meet Saturday with Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and President Wee Kim Wee as well as Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who ruled for 31 years before stepping down in November 1990.

On his final day in Australia, Mr. Bush vowed to resist protectionist pressures even as he sought to defend U.S. wheat subsidies that have hurt Australian farmers.

Mr. Bush said protectionist pressures at home are mounting in this election year. "None of us are pure," he said. "Not one country can say, 'we don't protect in some way or another.'"

But he pledged that as long as he remains president, "we are not going to go... down the protection path."

Mr. Bush was accompanied to Singapore by 11 U.S. corporate executives brought along mainly to press the case for removal of trade barriers.

Singapore and the United States share what Washington describes as excellent economic relations.

The United States and Singapore enjoy a growing \$21 billion bilateral trade. More than 800 U.S. companies operate in Singapore.

Singapore has a spotty record on human rights, but officials said Mr. Bush did not intend to make a public issue of that during his visit.

Singapore Foreign Ministry officials said there was no formal agenda and their leaders were prepared to discuss anything Mr. Bush cared to bring up.

Singapore's government has taken a hardline against political dissent, imposed controls on foreign publications, and has kept a law inherited from British colonial days that permits the indefinite detention of those deemed subversive without charge or trial.

The State Department human rights report this year cited "credible reports of recent mistreatment."

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

2 policemen shot dead in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Two policemen were shot dead in South Africa while patrolling the black township of Soweto, south west of Johannesburg, a police spokesman said Friday. Unknown gunmen opened fire on their vehicle Thursday evening in the second such ambush in two days. The deaths pushed the toll of police killed in attacks to 150 since the start of last year. Two policemen died the previous day in Tokoza township, south east of Johannesburg, when unknown gunmen opened fire on them and set their vehicle of fire. Earlier a policeman was shot dead while investigating fighting near his home in Soweto. Thursday's attack took place shortly after the public were reminded of a standing 25,000 rand (\$9,000) reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of people who killed police officers.

Mother Teresa suffers new chest pain

LA JOLLA, Calif. (AP) — Mother Teresa's doctors say it could be a month before they know how serious her heart condition is. The 81-year-old Roman Catholic nun, who won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the poor, remained in serious condition Friday at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation after doctors disclosed Thursday that she had suffered more chest pain. "She's not getting worse," Dr. Paul Teirstein said. "She has some good moments. She has some worse moments." She has been hospitalized since Dec. 26 for treatment of pneumonia that led to congestive heart failure. Doctors said the pain Wednesday night was caused by a spasm, or tightening, in a small coronary artery after a period of elevated blood pressure. The angina was treated with medicine, the hospital said in a statement. Angina is caused by an inadequate blood supply to the heart. The hospital said an angiogram indicated that all of her major blood vessels looked fine. The doctors said the arterial spasm was to be expected in a patient of Mother Teresa's age who has undergone an angioplasty. Her doctors performed the artery-opening procedure Sunday after pneumonia triggered an episode of congestive heart failure.

Burmese troops attack rebels

BANGKOK (AP) — Burmese troops attacked two guerrilla strongholds of the Karen ethnic minority along the Thai-Burmese border earlier this week, Thai border police said Friday. Police Maj. Gen. Khamron Leeyavanich said that the Karen rebel camps, Ye Gyaw and Kawmoorah, were shelled by Burmese artillery between Dec. 27-28. The regional border patrol police chief said no damage or casualties had been reported. The Karen rebels have been waging a guerrilla war for autonomy from the Burmese government for more than four decades. Over the past few years, Burmese forces have driven them into shrinking border enclaves. Gen. Khamron said he expected more fighting as the Burmese launch a dry-season offensive against the Karen, one of a number of ethnic minorities fighting for autonomy from the central government. Gen. Khamron denied a local newspaper report that 600 Karen refugees fled into Thailand in wake of the fighting. The report said the refugees were now in two districts of the northern Thai province of Tak.

U.S. may halt Vietnam embargo — Solarz

HANOI (R) — Visiting U.S. congressman Stephen Solarz said Friday the United States might lift its trade embargo against Vietnam this summer or autumn. He told reporters the move was likely if Hanoi continued to promote the Cambodian peace agreement and resolve the fate of American servicemen missing from the Vietnam War. Mr. Solarz, chairman of the House of Representatives Asia-Pacific Foreign Affairs Subcommittee, was speaking after meeting Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet and Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam during a one-day trip to Hanoi. "I certainly think there's a very real chance the embargo will be lifted by some time in the summer or fall of 1992, if they (Vietnam) have cooperated in the implementation of the Cambodian agreement and in the search for our MIAs (missing-in-action)," he said. Washington announced last year it was ready to start a process leading to the resumption of relations with Vietnam.

Albanian president suffers heart attack

TIRANA (AP) — President Ramiz Alia, 66, suffered a heart attack this week but is apparently in satisfactory condition, the Albanian News Agency (ATA) reported Friday. The official report provided few details of Mr. Alia's condition, saying no complications had occurred and his "general state" of health was good. Mr. Alia took over as president from longtime Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha, who died in April 1985. He stepped down as head of the Communist Party on May 5 and, under intense public pressure, allowed the formation of political parties. That development eventually triggered the demise of Communist rule in what had been Europe's most rigidly controlled country.

Taiwanese ask to bring wives from China

TAIPEI (R) — Hundreds of Taiwanese sought permission Friday to bring their mainland Chinese wives to the island after Taipei lifted a 43-year-old ban. Over 500 anxious men crowded into the Free China Relief Association in Taipei as authorities began accepting applications for 340 Chinese spouses to immigrate annually, an association spokeswoman said. Dozens had queued for several days and nights outside the association, a semi-official body handling the applications. Over 200 applications were received in the morning alone, the spokeswoman said. Some of the men became separated from their wives at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, while others had married in China during tourist or business trips. There were apparently no Taiwanese women with mainland Chinese husbands. Taiwan's Nationalist government, which has strictly curbed contact with China since it lost the war and fled to the island, began easing restrictions in the late 1980s. It agreed last year to let an annual quota of Chinese spouses immigrate. The number is limited for national security reasons, officials have said. Previously, only mainland Chinese over 70 or under 12 with relatives in Taiwan could immigrate.

Queen Elizabeth honours TV cameraman

LONDON (R) — Africa-based television cameraman Mohammed Amin, acclaimed for his film alerting the world to the 1984 famine in Ethiopia, was made a member of the Order of the British Empire in Queen Elizabeth's New Year honours list. The award announced Tuesday recognised Mr. Amin, 47, Africa bureau chief of the television news agency Visnews, for his contribution to photography and journalism. Bob Geldof, the Irish rock singer who was inspired by Amin's pictures to lead an international relief appeal for Ethiopia, once called him "the visual interpreter of man's stinking conscience." Last June Mr. Amin lost his left forearm in an explosion while filming a blazing munitions dump explosion in the centre of Addis Ababa. His Kenyan soundman, John Mathai, was killed.

2 Mozambican stowaways left at sea

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Two Mozambican stowaways found aboard a ship were put over the side in oil drums in shark-infested seas and told to find their own way to safety, according to a report Friday. The refugees from the Mozambican civil war were washed up Tuesday on South Africa's east coast, said the independent South African Press Association. The two were arrested as illegal immigrants. The unidentified men got aboard the ship in Mozambique, but were later found as it sailed along the South African coast, the report said. The pair were put into the oil drums and abandoned, it said. The ship was not identified and it was not known how far off shore the men were put into the sea, the report said. Impoverished Mozambicans, fleeing the civil war in their nation, often try to enter South Africa, mostly slipping over the land border.

COLUMN

Astrologers foresee earthquakes, floods, and wars in 1992

MILAN (AP) — Italian astrologers see bad omens for a new year they predict will be marked by major earthquakes, floods, wars and social upheavals. The astrologers, who held their yearly meeting recently at the gambling resort of San Remo, predicted major earthquakes in China and Mexico in 1992, renewed atrocities in Iraq and major social, economic and political changes in the United States. The star gazers said the bad omens can be seen in the growing influence of the moon and in the five lunar eclipses that will take place in the leap year. Italian astrologers traditionally link misfortune to the occurrence of eclipses, and the first one in 1992 comes in January. Marco Bellelli, known as "Mago Otelma" or "Magician Otelma," predicted major earthquakes in Mexico and China while floods and high tides will affect several countries. Star charts and crystal balls seemed unnecessary for some of the predictions. Several astrologers, for example, predicted the war would continue in Yugoslavia and that there would be growing problems for Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the new nations of the former Soviet Union. Lucia Alberti, an Austrian-born Italian astrologer who publishes a popular, yearly *Calendario Astrologico* (Astrologic Calendar), wrote that Germany will be faced with major internal political problems while the United States will go through major social, economic and political transformations.

Report: Well-being of American children on decline

WASHINGTON (AP) — American children today are more likely than the children of 30 years ago to suffer from behavioural disorders and perform poorly on standardised tests, according to an article published in the *Journal of Science*. During those same 30 years, the article says, the sum of all federal, state and local government spending on programmes for children increased at about half the rate of spending on programmes for adults. While not laying all the blame for children's problems on the shift in government spending, the article argues that the most efficient way for government to reverse the trend is to enact child-centred tax credits or other policies that would redistribute income from households that do not have children to those that do.

Over-eager fireman arrested for arson

LUGANO, Switzerland (R) — A young Swiss fireman commended by his chiefs for excellent work has been arrested for starting at least seven forest fires. Firefighting officials said Monday the pyromaniac fireman was arrested last week after colleagues became suspicious and began to keep an eye on him. The young man had a passion for flames and started them just for the pleasure of putting them out. His passion betrayed him, said Lugano's Deputy Fire Chief Renato Quadroni. "On Tuesday morning we almost caught him in the act. We arrested him ourselves and handed him in to district police," Mr. Quadroni said. The man became a volunteer fireman in January 1990 and soon began to attract praise for his "commitment and excellent work during fires." The local prosecutor said the man had confessed to starting the blazes and was being kept in prison.

Company builds casket for 509 kg man

EYNON, Pennsylvania (AP) — A company in this tiny town proved no job is too big when it built a 1.4-metre-wide, iron-reinforced casket for Walter Hudson, who weighed 509 kilograms when he died last week. Carl Short, production manager of Casket Shells Inc., said that the company is the nation's largest maker of specialty oversized caskets but that Mr. Hudson's casket had to be made by hand because it wouldn't fit on the production line. "Everybody was quite excited about it," Mr. Short said. "Everybody was quite pleased with how it turned out. It's the biggest one we've ever made." The velvet-lined box weighs about 362 kilograms. It's 137 centimetres wide, 102 centimetres deep and 224 centimetres long. A standard casket is 71 centimetres wide, 64 centimetres deep and 211 centimetres long.

France sends paratroops to Chad

TOULOUSE, France (R) — France sent paratroops to Chad on Friday, saying they would aid French nationals endangered by an advance of rebel fighters towards the capital N'Djamena.

The 141 men, based in the southwestern town of Castres, make up one of three companies being sent to reinforce France's 1,200-strong garrison in its former colony.

The other two are being flown in from other French bases in Africa.

"Our mission is to evacuate and protect French nationals in Chad," company Commander Colonel Christian Lurot told journalists.

France, which ruled Chad until

1960 and has 3,000 nationals there, decided to send the troops Thursday after a rebels were reported to have captured two towns near N'Djamena.

Ten Jaguar fighter-bombers have also been put on alert in France.

Official sources in Paris have said the French troops will be stationed at strategic points in the capital including the airport.

The government has not spelt out the troops' mission. In 1986 France sent reinforcements to protect then President Hiscene Habre against an attack by Libya.

Mr. Habre was deposed a year ago and his successor, Idriss Deby, has accused his supporters

of organising the rebel attacks. The French Foreign Ministry said civilians were in danger but that the rebels were disorganised.

"At the moment we're seeing action by uncontrolled armed bands," spokesman Maurice Gourdault-Montagne told reporters. "But there is a threat to civilians."

He said the French government had decided to send in troops after a request from Mr. Deby, who has pledged a return to multi-party politics since coming to power in November 1990.

"We support the democratic process begun by President Deby," Mr. Gourdault-Montagne said.

Indonesia warns Australia over protests

JAKARTA (R) — An angry Indonesia warned Australia Friday that relations could be at risk after a crowd protesting over November's Indonesian army massacre in East Timor harassed its diplomats in Canberra.

"We want those actions stopped. If they are not stopped the will clearly jeopardise our relations," Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told reporters.

He said demonstrators threw bricks at two embassy cars leaving the Canberra compound Thursday and diplomats had been harassed. Police failed to do more than shout at the mob to stop, he said.

"What makes us deeply concerned... (is that) those demonstrators have acted with apparent ease and complete freedom to do so," Mr. Alatas said.

The embassy has been picketed since Nov. 12 when Indonesian soldiers fired into a crowd of mourners in East Timor, killing scores and sparking an international outcry.

Radio Australia reported later that Canberra police had ordered protesters to disperse by Monday but, described by demonstrators as the East Timor "embassy", erected outside the Indonesian mission.

Australian union action against Indonesia resulted in a major commercial loss when Jakarta cancelled a \$6.1 million U.S. contract with Australia's largest company.

Broken Hill PTY said Friday a contract to ship 30,000 tonnes of steel slabs to state-owned Krakatau Steel was lost because of industrial action by a local trade union.

A government inquiry in East Timor said the army killed about 50 people and another 90 were still missing. Some local witnesses say the death toll could be as high as 180 and that the shootings were unprovoked.

Leading U.S. human rights group Asia Watch Friday demanded an international investigation into the shooting, saying the government's version of events was unacceptable.

But diplomats said the official report, which accused the powerful Indonesian army of overreacting, was likely to placate most foreign aid donors, on whom Jakarta relies heavily. Three countries have suspended aid over the shooting.

Mr. Alatas said that while Indonesia opposed and link between aid and human rights it realised that the shooting had been a serious setback to its efforts in East Timor.

Records show U.K. was ready for war over Berlin in 1961

LONDON (R) — Britain considered going to war over the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and then-Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said Germans only yielded to force, according to secret documents declassified Wednesday.

The documents also showed that Mr. Macmillan's Conservative Party was as divided as now over the European Community. International issues and domestic ones such as immigration to Britain and Sunday trading were as high on the agenda 30 years ago as they are today.

Memoranda from British defence chiefs, included in official papers released under Britain's 30-year secrecy rule, showed Britain and its World War II allies were determined to maintain the freedom of West Berlin "at the

risk of war if necessary."

"Germans, in particular, never yield to the force of argument, but only to the argument of force," Mr. Macmillan said in another document.

East Germany sealed the border between East and West Berlin in mid-August 1961 and erected a wall which divided the city.

At a meeting a week after the wall went up, defence chiefs discussed a paper called "Berlin contingency planning," which said the allies' objectives were to maintain the presence and security of their forces in West Berlin and ensure the freedom and viability of the city and physical access to it.

"Although every reasonable effort will be made to arrive at a peaceful settlement of the Berlin

question with the Soviet government, pending such a settlement they will take all necessary and appropriate steps to demonstrate their determination to secure their requirements, at the risk of war if necessary," the paper concluded.

On Europe, the Conservative Party and the cabinet were wracked by tensions and divisions in the year Britain first applied to join the EC.

Mr. Macmillan had to walk a tightrope as he tried to reach agreement with his own ministers and General Charles de Gaulle, then president of France, who vetoed Britain's membership.

"It is no good talking in general terms to the general," Mr. Macmillan said. Britain finally joined the EC in 1973.